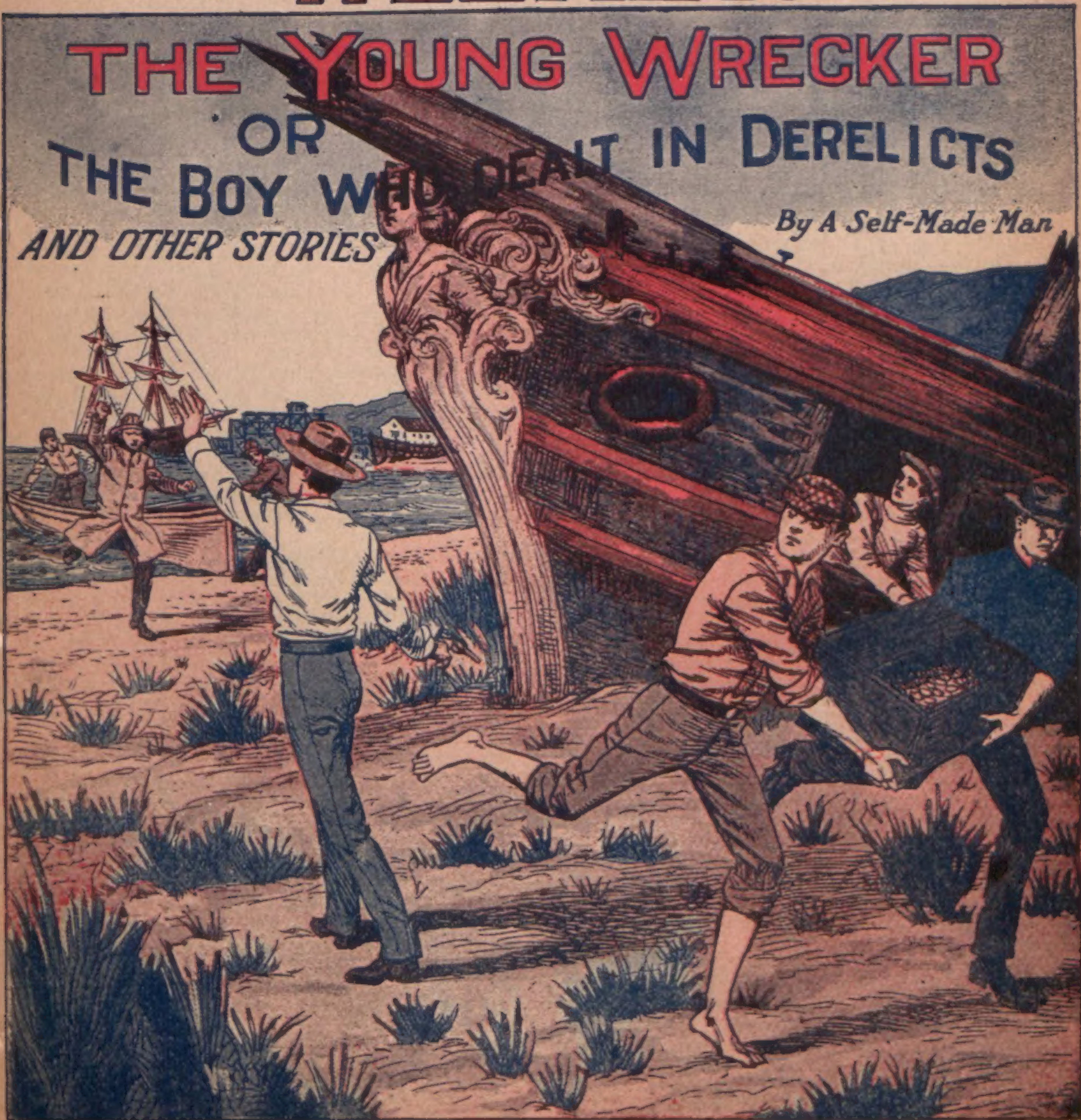


FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE

STORIES
OF
BOYSWEEKLY. WHO MAKE
MONEY.

THE YOUNG WRECKER OR THE BOY WHO DEALT IN DERELICTS *AND OTHER STORIES*

By A Self-Made Man

The boat grounded and three men sprang out of her. "Back!" cried Tom, as Gibson came running toward him. "Back or I'll shoot!" Ned and Billy seized the box of gold coin and started away with it on the run.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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THE YOUNG WRECKER

OR, THE BOY WHO DEALT IN DERELICTS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Young Wrecker and His Visitor.

"This is a queer business you have here, Decker," said a young man of a sporty and shifty appearance, whose name was Henry Gibson. "I don't see what you can make out of it."

"Oh, I manage to make a living and something over," replied Tom Decker, a shrewd-looking, business-like lad of eighteen.

The two were standing on the shore of a cove on the east side of San Francisco Bay, where it ran to the southward. Far away to the right in the dim distance, the afternoon sun sinking in the west flashed upon the elevated sections of the city of San Francisco, and upon the long strip of sparkling water which lay between the cove and the peninsula. The shore for the most part was low and marshy—a roosting spot for the white fog which came in later almost every day around dark at that season. Sometimes it didn't come as far as the cove.

At other times it extended beyond it. When the tide was low, which happened twice in every twenty-four hours, though not at the same hour, the mud was exposed for a good hundred feet out; when the tide was high, as in the present instance, the water rippled about the hulks of a dozen or more old derelicts, ranging in size from a dilapidated sloop, the hold of which was awash, to the battered wreck of what was once a full-rigged ship. There were three scows half full of water, and a tugboat without most of its machinery. Stuck in the sand of the cove was a big sign, painted on both sides, which read: "Tom Decker, Dealer in Derelicts. Old Crafts Bought for Cash. Second-Hand Marine Lumber, in Prime Condition, Furnished on Order. Scrap Iron For Sale. Office——"

Following the direction indicated by the index fist one saw the mastless hull of a small, well-preserved schooner lying imbedded in the sand of the cove, like a funny looking oblong windowless house. Her bow, propped on either side by a heavy beam, resting in the sand, pointed toward the bay. Her stern was ornamented by a double sign, nailed at an acute angle, like an arrow head, the point resting over her rudder pole, the ends secured to either side rail. This twin sign read; "Office of Tom Decker, Dealer in Derelicts."

The trunk roof of the cabin was furnished with

a sliding door, with padlock attachments both inside and out, and faced forward.

A short flight of brass-bound steps led down from the deck to a room furnished with a table, several chairs, a well-filled book-case, and other articles. A fairly roomy stateroom extended the width of the stern. It had a locker with a berth on top, a washstand attached to the wall, a camp chair, a small trunk, and other things. On either side of the cabin were four narrow rooms, not much larger than good-sized closets, each containing a locker and a berth, a small washstand, a shelf, and three or four hooks to hang wearing apparel on. In front of the cabin entrance loomed the stump of the mizzenmast. Well forward was the stump of the foremast. Between that and the curved bow was a scuttle pointing the way to the kitchen, which was supplied with a stove and all necessary utensils. The stove-pipe rose several feet above the level of the deck. The short bowsprit was intact, but quite bare of rigging. Amidships on the port side was a stumpy ladder of four wide steps, to make it easy for one to gain the deck from the sand. Having described the main features of the cove, we will return to the owner of this strange collection of craft, and his companion.

"Then you do get orders for marine lumber, scrap iron and such stuff?" said Gibson.

"Sure. What would be the good of carrying on this business if I didn't?" replied Decker.

"How do you sell your stuff?"

"Do you want to buy any of it?"

"No. What would I do with it?"

"Then what's the use of my quoting a figure?"

"I'd like to know what you get for it."

"You'll have to ask somebody who has bought of me then."

"Why don't you tell me?"

"I don't care to answer curious questions." Gibson was silent for a moment.

"Look here, Decker, do you want to make a bunch of money?"

"How?" asked Tom, who was not particularly taken with his companion, whom he had only recently got acquainted with.

"By standing in with me on a little piece of business I'm interested in."

"What's the nature of the business?" asked Tom, cautiously.

"That's a secret. I can't tell you till you agree to stand in with me."

"I never make an agreement in the dark."

Gibson looked disappointed.

"I have a fast sloop I go out fishing in with a couple of friends of mine," he said, after a pause, "and I want you to let me run her up here in the cove maybe a couple of nights from now."

"I haven't any objection to you doing that, but if the tide is low you can't get ashore," said Tom.

"I guess we can wade in gumboots. The mud isn't over a foot and a half deep. I mean you won't sink into it more than that. I've seen Chinamen wading about in it after mussels and clams."

"Why do you want to run your sloop into such an out-of-the-way spot?"

"I'll tell you if you promise to be mum."

"I won't make any promises beforehand."

"Well, I'll trust you. It is this way: I've got so deep in debt over at the city that several of my creditors have got judgments out against me, and the sheriff is looking around for something to levy on. Somebody told him I owned the sloop, and he has a deputy out hunting for it. She's anchored in Alameda Creek at present, but it won't do for her to remain there. We're going out fishing to-night or to-morrow night, and when we come back I want to run the sloop up here among your bulks and leave her for a while. If the sheriff's deputy should come nosing around here, why, I want you to say that she's your property, then he won't touch her, see?"

"I see, but I don't believe in telling falsehoods."

"Oh, pshaw! Everybody conceals the truth nowadays when it's to his interest to do it."

"But it's no interest of mine to lie for your benefit."

"I'll make it worth your while. I'll give you \$100 rent for the right to anchor the sloop in your creek whenever I want to do it."

"I think it would pay you better to use the money in settling with your most insistent creditors."

"A hundred dollars wouldn't go far in that direction."

"You must owe a lot of money."

"I do."

"If you were so lucky as to find people to trust you, I should think common honesty would suggest to you that you ought to pay them by degrees."

"I intend to one of these days."

"That's a lame excuse. I don't buy anything I am not sure I can pay for."

"You're lucky to have the cash. Do you really pay spot cash for your hulks?"

"I have done that so far. I can make a better bargain. I've got to buy on bargain lines to make a respectable profit out of them."

"How do you figure on a derelict? You must be able to size up what they will bring you when broken up."

"Of course. If I didn't know the business I wouldn't be able to run it."

"How long have you been in it?"

"About six months."

"Is that all? You found all these wrecks in that time?"

"Oh, no. Personally I've only bought those three scows yonder."

"What about the rest? How did you get them?"

"Oh, a relative of mine who carried on the

business for years at this place, died some eight months ago and left everything he owned to me. He transferred it over to me for a dollar when he knew that his time was come."

"I s'pose you hold a lease on the creek?"

"Yes, and the ground around it for some distance. It's not good for anything."

"Who owns the property?"

"I'm not saying who owns it."

"Well, how about that proposition?"

Tom considered the matter some minutes. One hundred dollars was quite tempting, but for all that he didn't like to enter into such an indefinite arrangement.

"How long do you want to use the creek as a mooring ground?"

"I couldn't say how long."

"I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll let you anchor your sloop here for \$10 a month in advance, the arrangement subject to cancellation on fifteen days notice on either side."

"All right; that will suit me," said Gibson, in a tone of satisfaction. "Here is your first month's rent," and he offered Tom a golden eagle.

"Come over to my office and we'll draw the paper up in regular shape."

They walked over to the stranded schooner.

"Is this where you hang out?"

"Yes."

"Sleep aboard and do your own cooking, I s'pose?"

"Yes. The schooner is as good as a house. The water seldom comes up around her bows. She's perfectly dry, and I'm surrounded by fresh air and sunshine most all the time in daylight."

"How about the fogs?"

"They come in here frequently."

Gibson looked pleased.

"I s'pose you don't mind them?"

"Not a bit."

"I should think it would be lonesome for you."

"Oh, I have company."

"Have you?" said Gibson, his face dropping.

"My friend, Ned Baldwin, and two other boys hang out here with me and help me in the business."

"All boys?"

"Yes."

Gibson looked relieved. They stepped aboard the schooner and went down into the cabin. There they found Baldwin at the table doing a lot of figuring.

"Ned, let me make you acquainted with Henry Gibson," said Tom.

Baldwin jumped up and offered the visitor his hand.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Gibson," he said.

"Gibson wants the privilege of anchoring his sloop in the cove, and is going to pay me \$10 a month for it. I want you to witness the agreement as soon as I draw it up."

"All right," said Ned, cheerfully. "Rather a poor anchorage spot, I should think on account of the mud when the tide is running out."

"I told him that, but he doesn't seem to mind it."

The agreement was drawn up and signed, and Gibson was told that he could bring his craft there whenever he was ready to do so, and let

her remain as long as the agreement was in force.

"All right," said the young man. "Have a drink?"

He pulled out a pocket flask nearly full of whisky. The boys declined to imbibe, so Gibson took a drink himself and then he and Tom left the cabin. After further talk on deck, Gibson departed to connect with a train from San José for Oakland at a small way station a mile distant.

CHAPTER II.—The Oyster Pirate.

As he vanished from view, a trim little sloop came around a turn in the shore and headed in for the creek. Two boys were aboard of her. One was named Billy West and the other Mike Barry. They lived on the stranded schooner, too, and acted as helpers to Tom Decker. The young wrecker's three assistants had no other home than they found with him, nor any relatives that took any interest in them. He picked them up at different times in San Francisco, and he treated them so well that they were stanch and true to his interests.

Billy and Mike had been away a couple of hours fishing for crabs, and they brought back a bunch with them. Mike was the cook for the party, as he acted in that capacity in a cheap restaurant on Pacific street in the city for a while, and he was quite good at it. About this time Ned finished his figuring on an old sloop which had been advertised for sale at a bargain. Tom had found out the owner's lowest price, and then after looking the boat over, secured a forty-eight hour option on her for \$10. The sloop, while not actually a derelict, was of no particular use as she stood. The owner found it would not pay to have her repaired enough to carry freight up the Sacramento River, in which trade she had been employed, and so he wanted to get rid of her.

Tom and Ned believed that with their facilities they could make her serviceable at a small cost, in which event Tom knew he could dispose of her at a handsome profit. In any case he would lose nothing if he had to break her up. He was short of ready cash, however, and depended on collecting a sum due him from a foundry for several loads of scrap iron he had delivered. The owner of the sloop agreed to take part cash and a sixty-day note for the balance. Ned submitted his figures to Tom on deck, and by the time the young wrecker had gone over them and found the result satisfactory, the sloop, with Billy and Mike, came to anchor in the channel of the cove, and were tossing their load of crabs into the skiff they had towed behind. The tide was up then, and they brought the skiff right up to the bow of the schooner and made her fast. Mike swung himself up and Billy handed him a basketful of crabs. He dumped them on the deck and handed it back for more. They had four basketfuls in all. The four boys were very fond of deviled crabs, and that was to be the main dish for supper. Mike could make it to the queen's taste. He started a fire in the stove and put a big iron pot full of water on to boil. After cooking the crabs, he and Billy would remove the meat, mix

it with bread crumbs, fill a dozen empty shells with the mixture, and bake them in the oven. A great deal depended on the seasoning, but this was one of Mike's big points.

While Mike and Billy were getting supper ready Tom and Ned went over to a half demolished derelict and resumed work pulling her to pieces. They already had several piles of wood near by—some of it good stuff, and some intended to be reduced to firewood, in which shape it was sold to a yard that took all Tom was able to furnish. Quite a bit of wood was picked up along the bay, it being a part of Mike and Billy's business to hunt for it.

Many an old tree was brought to the cove and sawed and split there. Very few idle moments Tom's three helpers had, and though he paid them very little, they preferred the life in the cove to a less laborious one in the city, with more pay, because board and lodging, for one thing, would eat it all up. With Tom they considered themselves to some extent their own bosses, and if they worked hard it was because it suited them to do so, for that was the condition on which they stayed. They liked Tom, and they liked each other, and so the nightly temptations of the city had no particular attraction for them. All was not plain sailing for Tom and his little bunch. Very often they had trouble with tramps who came that way and insisted on being housed and fed until they felt like moving on. They came around at all hours, and when driven off at the point of a revolver at night, they'd sneak back and hide in one of the derelicts till the boys turned in, and then try to break into either the kitchen or cabin of the schooner. Then the boys would tumble out in a hurry, and there'd be a fight. More than once a tramp was shot and had to be taken to Oakland for treatment. The tramps who came in the daytime were not so hard to handle. None of them, however, were welcome. Worse than the tramps were the oyster pirates, who, when a descent was made on them, fled in all directions in their fleet craft and took refuge wherever they could. The cove was a handy spot, and occasionally they came in there. They were a hard lot, handy with their knives, and the boys were careful not to bother with them if they kept their distance. When on the run, if the tide served, they beached their boats in the midst of the derelict fleet, where it was hard to distinguish them, and there they lay till the harbor patrol gave up the chase. Usually the boys were asleep and knew nothing of their coming and going. Tom wouldn't have cared so much about their seeking refuge in the cove but for the fact that an officer of the patrol called on him one day, and, after inspecting the place, remarked that the derelicts ought to be cleaned out, and that he was going to have it done.

That made Tom mad, and he told the officer that the Commission had no right to interfere with his business, and if they tried to he would get out an injunction against them. He said he couldn't prevent the oyster pirates coming in there. When they did, it was the patrol's business to follow and capture them if they could, or, at any rate, they could take possession of any boat that did not belong to him. Tom's resolute stand had its effect, and he heard nothing more

on the subject. The boys had their supper that night just as dusk was stealing over the bay, and the crabs went fine, with fried potatoes, bread and butter and coffee.

There was no lack of milk and butter, for Billy got a daily supply from a farmhouse half a mile away, which he sometimes paid for in fish or crabs. Not infrequently they got fresh bread from the same source, for he stood in with the daughter of the house. It was a starlight evening, but the sea mist was already thick on a line with Alameda Creek, and as time passed it rolled down on the cove. The boys gathered around the table in the cabin and played euchre until they grew sleepy, and then they turned in. Toward morning Tom was aroused by several pistol shots not far away. The inference was that the patrol had chased some of the oyster pirates into the cove, and a scrap between them was taking place. Tom opened the sliding door and looked out. He could make out nothing owing to the thickness of the fog. He could hear sounds telling of a combat somewhere among the hulks. There were no more shots, and the rumpus finally died away. Then he heard the sounds of oars, which gradually died away. After that there was a deep silence. The boys were up at six next morning. The fog still hung over the bay, but it had receded from the cove. The deck of the schooner was as wet as though rain had fallen during the night. Tom told Ned about the scrap that had been pulled off in the cove.

"Must have been the patrol and the oyster pirates," he said. "The officers caught them at work in the fog over one of the beds and chased one or more of the boats in here."

They stepped down on the sand and started to see where the trouble had occurred. They were poking around among the wrecks when they were confronted by a hard-looking, weather-beaten man, whose head was bound up by a bloody rag. He glared savagely at them.

"What are you doin' around here?" he snarled, laying his hand on the hilt of his knife, the blade of which was concealed in his trousers.

His only other garment was a woollen shirt.

"What are you doing here?"

"What is that to you?" said the man with another scowl.

"I am in possession of this property. All these wrecks belong to me. You are trespassing."

The fellow muttered an imprecation.

"You will keep your mouth shut about me or," and he touched his knife handle significantly.

"I suppose you're one of the oyster pirates?" said Tom. "You were chased in here last night, and there was a fight."

The man hissed out another imprecation and half drew his knife.

"What are you so cranky about? We are not going to make trouble for you. You can stay here till you get ready to go. We are not helping the patrol do their work. Were your friends captured?"

"Yes; blame the luck, and our boat, too," said the man.

"Well, you're safe enough now, even if they came back here, which they're not likely to do, for they couldn't prove you were in the boat. The fog was too thick for anybody to be recognized."

"Are you the chap who owns these wrecks?"

"Yes."

"I want to make a deal with you."

"You can't make any deal with me."

"You had better, or some night we will come here and make short work of you."

"If you talk that way, I will have nothing to say to you. I want nothing to do with you or your friends. If you think you can come here and do us up, try it."

The man saw that Tom was a resolute chap, so he calmed down a bit.

"Go away and leave me alone," he said.

"If you want something to eat before you go away, come over to the schooner, on the sand in half an hour and I'll see that you have breakfast."

"You mean that?"

"I do."

"Very well; I'll come."

He was as good as his word. Thirty minutes later Tom and Ned, who had returned to the schooner, saw him coming over the sand toward them with a basket on his shoulder. When he got close they saw that the basket was full of oysters. He walked up the steps and put the basket down.

"You do not object to some oysters," he said. "It is the pay for my breakfast."

Mike was fetching the meal into the cabin, and his eyes glistened when he saw what was in the basket.

"Be me sowl!" he said. "It's eyesters me mouth has been waterin' for these seven days back. Shall I open a few for brickfast?"

Tom didn't particularly relish the idea of accepting the shellfish, which he felt had been stolen from the bed of their owner, but under the circumstances he stifled his scruples and told Mike to go ahead.

"Set another plate at the table for this man. He is going to eat with us," he said.

"Faith I will, wid pleasure."

The words, however, did not express his real sentiments. There was too much of the rascal about the visitor to please him. At this moment Billy returned with the milk and a loaf of bread. The man seemed surprised to find so many boys about the place, and instinctively looked around to see if there were more of them. Before the party went downstairs he asked Tom if he would take him up to Oakland in the sloop. He said there six more baskets of oysters hidden in the wreck where Tom and Ned encountered him, and he wanted to get them away. Tom declined to accommodate him, because to do as he wanted was to make himself an accomplice in the oyster stealing business.

"Go and find a boat and take your oysters away yourself," he said.

"You will not take them if I do?" said the man.

"I will have nothing to do with them," said Tom.

The fellow seemed satisfied, and then they went to breakfast.

CHAPTER III.—At Hunter's Point.

After the meal the man went away without having mentioned his name. Tom walked over to the station and took a train for Oakland. From

Oakland he took a train for the ferry slip at the end of what in those days was a long wooden bridge, but was even then undergoing the filling-in process to transform it into a solid pier. The fog was all gone and the sun was shining brightly. In due time the young wrecker was landed at the foot of Market street, San Francisco, and he started off to make his collections. He found no trouble in getting the money. Not having enough to make the agreed upon payment on the sloop, he called on the wood and coal yard people whom he supplied with firewood, and asked for a small loan in addition to what was due him, promising to send over wood enough that afternoon to square the debt. He got the accommodation. Then he called on the owner of the sloop and completed the deal. He visited a ship chandler where he had credit, and bought a few things he wanted, carried them to the sloop, and made sail for the cove.

The sloop leaked badly on the way, but he expected she would. The leak, however, proved worse than he anticipated, and he found the water slushing over the cockpit floor. He was forced to begin bailing when the sloop was off Mission Rock. The water in the cabin was up to his ankles. He soon found that the water was coming in faster than he could throw it out, and it became a serious question whether he would be able to get his purchase over to the cove in the light breeze that was blowing. He wished he had brought Ned along, for his presence aboard would have been an immense help to him. The necessity of preparing a lot of kindling wood for delivery that afternoon had prevented him from bringing him for one thing, since the united labor of his three assistants was necessary to prepare the wood and load it aboard of the working sloop.

Besides, he had not anticipated having any difficulty with the condemned sloop. After getting a mile from shore the water was up to the cabin bunks and a foot deep in the cockpit. Then he gave up and headed for Hunter's Point, not at all certain that the vessel would not sink under him before he got there. The change in the course made a difference in the situation. The sloop heeled the other way, for she was sailing now on a line that formed an acute angle with her previous course. It was clear that a particularly defective plank in her port side was the cause of the trouble, since she took in water somewhat slower now. Tom belayed the mainsheet around a cleat and fell to baling like a good fellow. In this way he was able to keep the water from increasing, and even to reduce it some.

He made Hunter's Point in safety, and ran the sloop broadside against the shelving shore, figuring that the receding tide would soon cause her to careen to the starboard, which would enable him to examine the planks on the port side for the bad one which had caused all the trouble. Anchored close by was a trim-looking sloop, freshly painted, with her name, Yerba Buena, showing in raised gilt letters on her stern. Tom, who admired jaunty boats, looked her over critically. Her sharp lines and raking mast indicated that she was a smart sailer. A man of forty, in a coarse suit and soft, narrow-brimmed hat, sat forward smoking a pipe. He noticed

the coming of Tom's weather-beaten boat, and was not surprised when he saw how much water she had in the cockpit.

"Hello, shipmate," he grinned, "where did you get that Noah's Ark?"

"Just bought her," replied the boy.

"Bought her! How much did you give for her—four bits?"

"Don't you think she's worth more than that?"

"She ain't worth a whole lot. What did you put in here for? Afraid she was going to sink?"

"You've hit it. I knew she was leaky, but I wasn't aware she had sprung a plank until I left the dock. She's half full of water."

"Where were you bound?"

"Across the bay."

"How far did you get with her?"

"About a mile out. If I'd continued on that tack she'd have left me swimming for my life."

"Why didn't you buy a boat that would float?"

"She will float when I get throught with her."

"A few new planks will fill the bill."

"I doubt it. She's only good for the scrap heap. There's a fellow about your age over at Shelter Cove yonder. He buys derelicts for cash. He's got a slew of them anchored in the mud."

Tom chuckled as the man referred to him without knowing it.

"What does he do with them?"

"Break them up for the wood and iron and copper that's in them."

"You never met him, I suppose?"

"No. The boss says he's a clever chap."

"What boss?"

"The owner of this sloop."

"Who is that?"

"Henry Gibson."

"Is that Gibson's sloop—the one he goes fishing in?"

"Yes. Who told you he went fishing in her?"

Tom was about to say that Gibson had told him so himself, when it occurred to him that perhaps he had better not.

"I heard so," he replied.

"Does this boat look like a fishing smack?"

"No. She's a mighty fine looking craft. People of leisure go fishing in any kind of a boat."

"Well, we sometimes go fishing out toward the Farallones."

"Is this your regular anchorage?"

"Yep, for the present."

"I thought I saw this boat over in Alameda Creek," said Tom, remembering that Gibson had told him the day before that was where his sloop was.

"You didn't see this boat there."

"She wasn't there yesterday, then?"

"Not that I know of, and I've been aboard of her right along."

"Do you look after her when Gibson isn't aboard?"

"Yep. Me and the cook and another chap."

"Are you three regularly employed?"

"I reckon we are."

"It costs money to keep three men, pay them wages and board them."

"Gibson doesn't get us for nothing, sonny. I've got a wife and a couple of kiddies to support, and Jim, the cook, has a wife somewhere in San Leandro, working in the hotel there."

"Where is Gibson now?"

"Dunno. Off sporting, I guess."

"He lives on what he owes, I suppose?"

"No reflections, sonny. He's got money to burn."

"He's lucky," replied Tom, thinking that the sailor's words did not jibe very well with Gibson's statement made to himself that his creditors were making things hot for him.

The man on the Yerba Buena made no secret of the ownership of the sloop, which seemed strange if a sheriff's deputy was looking for the vessel. If the official in his hunt came to Hunter's Point, as he might easily do, he would find what he was looking for. Tom began to think that Gibson had lied to him about his circumstances, and he wondered what his object was in doing so. At that moment a boy came down to look at the old sloop, now heeled over a bit, and Tom asked him if he wanted to earn two-bits.

"Bet your life," replied the youth. "What do you want me to do for the money?"

"Help me bail this craft out."

"I'll do it."

"Come aboard, then."

The boy clambered in, his bare feet and tucked-up trousers being well adapted to the job. Tom handed him a bucket and sent him into the cabin.

"Throw the water out into the cockpit," he said, and the boy started to do it.

Tom, using a tin pail, began bailing the water out of the cockpit. It took them half an hour to get the cabin practically free of the water. The hold was full below the level of the cabin deck. That would have to be got out with a hand-pump. Tom had one over at the cove. He judged that he could patch up the bad plank well enough to carry the sloop to her destination. By this time the sloop lay over at an angle of forty-five degrees, and she would stay that way for some hours, till the tide righted her.

Tom got out on the shore and carefully examined the exposed port side. He found a plank that was so rotten that it was as porous as a sieve. He got a strip of canvas and tacked it closely over the worst part of the plank, and then he nailed a piece of wood over it. A further examination of the hull showed other bad planks that would have to be replaced later if the sloop was ever to go into commission again. The starboard side was pretty nearly as bad. Altogether, the old tub was in very bad shape, but Tom expected to make two or three hundred per cent. profit on his purchase. Having done all he could to the boat, he went away, after making a calculation of the time that would elapse before the tide swerved again. He had his lunch while away, and returned to the Point an hour before the tide floated the sloop. The wind had freshened somewhat and the bay was alive with white caps. This suited Tom first rate, for he could make a quick trip down to the cove.

As soon as the bow sprung around he hoisted the sail part way and then put the boat on her course. Securing the rudder in position, he went forward and hoisted the jib. Then he completed the raising of the mainsail. The craft behaved very well; all things considered, and held well up in the wind. During the run very little water came into the cabin, and none at all into the cockpit. When about two-thirds of the distance

had been reeled off, he spied his working sloop coming toward him, with Ned and Billy on board. She had her load of kindling wood on board. Tom should have reached the cove before noon, and was expected, but the trouble he had been up against had made him five hours behind. It was now half-past four.

As Ned knew the wood had to be delivered before the yard closed, he did not wait for his boss to show up before starting for the city. The two sloops passed within a hundred yards of one another, and Ned and Billy waved their arms at Tom when they recognized him. He returned the salute, and the boats rapidly drew apart. In the course of thirty minutes more Tom ran into the cove and shouted to Mike to come off in the skiff. It was nearly high tide, and the two boys moored the old sloop where she would be aground at half ebb, and on her beam ends in the mud at low tide.

CHAPTER IV.—The Mysterious Packages.

"That eyster pirate came here about noon in a sailboat wid another chap of his own stripe after his eysters," said Mike. "When he found we hadn't touched thim he said we were bully fellers, and thot the first time it was convenient for him, or wan of his frinds, we'd be presinted wid another basket of the say fruit."

"I hope it won't be convenient for him to keep his word, for I don't care to have anything to do with stolen goods," said Tom.

"Sure we ain't supposed to know they're stolen," said Mike, who loved oysters.

"That's all nonsense, Mike. We know those fellows don't get them honestly, and the receiver is as bad as the thief."

"Ye took a basketful this mornin', faith."

"I know I did, but I felt obliged to take them under the circumstances. Those chaps are desperately bad rascals, and I don't want to incur their ill will. That is why I take no notice if they run in here at night. If that gang took it into their heads to clean us out, they'd find a way to do it."

"Bejabbers, I belave yez. I seen blood on wan of thim scows where the fight was pulled off. More than wan man got hurt, ye kin gamble on it. Did yez hear anythin' in the city about the trouble?"

"No. I have a Chronicle in my pocket, but I haven't read it yet. Probably there is nothing in the morning papers about it, for it must have been close on to daylight by the time the patrol landed any prisoners they captured."

"What kept yez so long in the city? We expected ye to dinner."

Tom explained the condition of the sloop after he got her under way, and said he had to put in at Hunter's Point to avoid going to the bottom of the bay.

"I suppose yez will break her up, thin?" said Mike.

"Not at all. I intend to repair and sell her."

"But if her bottom is no good, will yez be able to repair her?"

"Her hull, as a whole, isn't so rotten. When Ned and I get through with her she'll be in shape to return to the river trade again."

"Did ye mate the sloop on the way over? She carried a full load of kindling wood. Sure we worked like the Ould Nick to-day gettin' it together."

"Yes, I passed her. It will be late when she gets back."

"Well, it's toime I started to get supper. We will have fried eggs and bacon, wid fried potatoes, or lyonnaise potatoes, if yez prefer."

"All right, Mike," said Tom, starting for the cabin.

The working sloop got back at half-past nine that evening. Ned and Billy had had their supper at a restaurant in the city, for they knew there would be nothing for them when they returned to the cove. There was no fog that night, and the glow of the city's lights in the air could be seen from the schooner's deck, where all hands sat and talked until close on to eleven. Billy had brought a supply of cigarettes back with him, and some smoking tobacco for Mike to use in his pipe. Neither Tom nor Ned indulged in tobacco in any shape. Breakfast was ready at six, as usual, next morning, at which hour the tide was high. The rise and fall of the tides varied an hour from day to day. The morning previous it had been high tide around five, and the following day it would be high tide at seven, and so on, one hour later each day. High tide that afternoon would be at half-past six, and the ensuing day at twenty-minutes past seven. After breakfast Tom rowed out to the old sloop and found a foot of water in the cabin. Returning, he put the hand-pump into the skiff, and went back with Billy and Ned. An hour's labor got most of the water out of the vessel, and then she was run nose on onto a pair of inclined ways.

A strong rope was run from her bow to a windlass on a platform at the head of the ways, and with the help of Mike, who had cleaned up his culinary department, was hauled up out of the water and blocked up. There she was left for the present, while the boys resumed their work on the vessel they were breaking up. About a third of her copper sheathing had been removed to a nearby shed. All the bolts, spikes, nails and other small pieces of iron were dropped into gunny sacks, which, when full, were deposited in the shed until enough had been accumulated to make a load for the sloop to carry to the city. All the good timbers and planks were piled up after the fashion in vogue in lumber yards, each kind by itself, while the rejected wood was thrown into irregular piles, and afterward sawed up into suitable lengths for firewood. After dinner Tom and Ned thoroughly inspected the hull of the old sloop and chalked the timbers that had to be replaced by sound planks. Her sheathing appeared to be sound, but needed a thorough cleaning, as it was covered with fungus, mussels and other things that did not belong there. Her iron ballast was hoisted out of the hold, and her interior gone carefully over. Her cabin needed repainting. It had two staterooms aft, and a couple of bunks and lockers on either side concealed by dirty curtains. The curtains, of course, would have to be replaced by new ones. By judicious repairing, painting and general freshing up she could be made a different looking vessel that should fetch a fair price. Her previous

owner might have had all necessary work done and continued her in the service with advantage to himself; but having got the idea in his head that it wouldn't pay, he got rid of her to Tom. Tom picked up quite a knowledge of ship carpentering from his late relative, who gave him the wrecking business, during the three years he worked for him at the cove, and he found Ned an able helper at anything he was asked to turn his hand to.

In fact, Ned was one of those persons who are handy at anything. He and Tom got busy on the sloop, while Billy and Mike went back to the wrecking business. Thus the four put in a busy day. They had supper at seven and turned in at nine, for they were all tired out. Tom seldom woke up till morning once he put his head on his pillow, but something aroused him around two o'clock next morning. He opened the cabin door and looked out. A light mist hung about the cove, and the tide was half flood. He heard voices on the shore. Looking in the direction of the sounds, he saw a long sloop as close in as it was prudent for her to go. Two men were tramping through the mud and water, each with a bundle in his arms. They carried them up to the top of the low bluff and vanished among the bushes, presently reappearing empty-handed and returning to a small boat drawn up at the water's edge.

Picking a couple of similar bundles out of the boat, they repeated their performance. Tom was perfectly satisfied that the new arrival was Gibson's Yerba Buena. There was nothing singular in her appearance in the cove after the arrangement made with Tom by her owner. What puzzled Tom was the landing of the packages. He thought it a singular proceeding. The packages were apparently all the same size and tightly wound about with cord, or something else that answered the same purpose. While Tom looked the men made half a dozen trips from the boat to the bluff. Then they returned to the sloop and a lot more of the same kind of packages were handed to them out of the cockpit. The boat was then brought to the edge of the mud and the trips to the bluff resumed. To say the truth, Tom didn't fancy the look of things. There was an air of mystery about the packages that piqued his curiosity. His arrangement with Gibson was for anchorage for the sloop. The owner had not said anything about landing stuff at that out-of-the-way spot. Why should he land anything there?

It was no place for such a thing. Of course, there must be some reason for the proceeding. Tom decided that it was his business to know what was going on at his ground. He put on his clothes, slipped over the stern of the schooner, and, keeping that stranded craft between him and the scene of operations, made his way down the shore until the midst hid him from sight of the Yerba Buena. Then he made for the bluff, walked to the top of it, turned to the right and started back in the direction he had come. Presently he saw the shadow of the two men rise to the top of the bluff, and walk in among the trees. Tom followed them curiously.

"There, that's the last of it, and mighty glad I am we've got it all ashore," said a voice. "Now help me spread that piece of sailcloth over them

and then we'll fill in the dirt and scatter the remainder after masking the hole with brush."

"Suppose the boys should take notice of what's been done here, investigate and find the bundles? They would suspect there was something queer about them and notified the authorities?" said the first speaker's companion.

"The chances are they never come up here except by accident. Their business is confined to the shore."

"Well, I think the boss is taking chances," said the other.

The voice sounded suspiciously like the man Tom had talked to on the sloop at Hunter's Point. He was sure it was the same party, since the sloop was undoubtedly the Yerba Buena. He was also sure that some crooked game was being pulled off. He resolved to investigate the hole and see what was the nature of the bundles. For all he knew to the contrary, Gibson might be a crook, and with his men had robbed some store or wholesale house of a quantity of valuable merchandise. It looked very like that, even apart from the brief conversation he had just overheard. While he was thinking the men had quit talking and were working with shovels, filling up the hole. Tom crept closer to observe them.

He had to be cautious, for the dry bush cracked at the slightest touch. The mist was dense on the bluff, so that the figures of the men, in the shadow of the trees, were not easy to make out. They looked more like uncertain phantoms of human beings working away at the job they had in hand. Finally the work was completed to their satisfaction, and the spot was covered by a big bunch of brush they dragged over it. The surplus earth they scattered around among the trees, and then throwing the shovels over their shoulders, they started back toward the water.

CHAPTER V.—The Opium Smugglers.

Tom did not follow the men, but waited till they were out of sight. Then he pushed through the bushes to the place where the packages were buried. Having made a note of the spot, he returned to the schooner by the road and left it. Looking toward the anchored Yerba Buena that lay like a spectral craft in the midst of the cove, he could make out nobody on her deck. The bull's-eyes at intervals along the side of the raised trunk cabin roof, with the skylight above, flashed light, so it was a safe bet that all hands were under cover.

The deserted deck tempted Tom to run the risk of visiting the vessel to see if he could learn something that would explain the burying of the goods. He believed it was his duty to get to the bottom of the matter. At any rate, he felt he would not be satisfied until he did. The skiff belonging to his working sloop was tied to the bows of the schooner, and aground in the mud. The water line was a good thirty feet away, and to reach it Tom would have to walk out through the deep mud and drag the skiff with him, or push it before him. The mud was soft, clinging stuff, that was not nice to tramp through. The two men, however, had been forced to go through

it with their bundles. Tom could not be turned from his purpose by a little unpleasantness, which he was more or less accustomed to in the course of his business, so he removed his shoes, rolled up his trousers, jumped down on the mud and again and made his way to the bow.

Unhitching the painter, he pushed the boat before him until he shoved her into water deep enough to float her, then he got aboard and rowed softly out to the sloop. There was no doubt about her being the same one he had seen at Hunter's Point, unless that one had a twin. To make sure, Tom stood up in the skiff and flashed a match on the stern where he had seen the name "Yerba Buena." To his surprise he read, "Sarah Perry."

"That's funny," he thought. "I'm sure this is the Yerba Buena."

He looked closely at the letters. They were gilt ones standing out exactly like the ones he had seen on the sloop at Hunter's Point. He gave the puzzle up for the time being, pulled around amidship, tied his skiff and clambered aboard.

He quite overlooked the fact that he was leaving a muddy print of his naked feet on the sloop's clean deck. The skylight was partly raised, and a whiff of heated air struck Tom in the face as he bent over it and looked down into the cabin where four men were seated around the table, drinking and playing cards. The party at the head of the table he recognized as Henry Gibson. Beside him was a well-dressed young man of about the same age. Facing him was the man Tom talked to over at Hunter's Point, on board of the Yerba Buena. Another roughly-dressed man was ensconced at the foot of the table. The four appeared to be hobnobbing on the same social plane.

"This trip has been a great success," said Gibson, lighting a fresh cigar. "We didn't meet with the slightest trouble at any point. The fog covered our movements nicely. The steamer slowed down in response to our signals, and our friend aboard was on hand to throw us a rope. While I was on the bridge talking to the chief officer and getting our bearings, the opium was let down to you chaps—an extra load this time. The steward saw his chance to get it all away under cover of the thick mist. Then we followed the steamer in to the bar, where she had to wait an hour for the tide to take her across. We went on, and finally made our way out. Having cached the opium, it will make no difference to us if the custom house officers get a hint of the affair. If all is serene, Sam Wong will be after the goods some time to-morrow night, and the price will be in our pockets, after the steward has been settled with."

"So the mystery is out," thought Tom. "Gibson, and his pals are opium smugglers. They got the stuff off an incoming China steamer that reached port to-night, through the connivance of the steward, who stands in with them in the game. Under the cover of the fog they've got the better of the government authorities, and now that it is out of the sloop, and buried ashore, they think it's all over but the shouting. They'll find out their mistake before Sam Wong comes to claim it. I'll see that the custom house gets the tip."

"Say, Jenkins," said Gibson, to the man Tom had talked to, "did you replace the man on the stern?"

"Not yet," replied the man.

"Don't forget to do it before you turn in. The Yerba Buena is our right name, remember. The fog will probably be out of the cove by morning, and as those boys ashore may be early risers, it won't do for them to see the words Sarah Perry. We couldn't make the alterations after that without arousing the suspicion of the young wrecker, who is as sharp as a needle."

"I'll attend to the matter," said Jenkins.

Tom listened to the conversation a while longer, and when Jenkins shoved back his chair, he thought it time for him to beat a retreat. He slipped over the sloop's side into his boat just as Jenkins came up out of the cabin. After taking a look around, Jenkins went forward and disappeared down into the quarters in the bow. Tom took advantage of his chance to shove off into the mist and head for the stranded schooner. The tide was still lower and he had a longer distance to splash through the mud, drawing the skiff after him. Making her fast, he took his shoes and walked along the shore to a little creek where he washed the mud from his legs, then returned to the schooner and turned in without any of his companions being the wiser of his nocturnal adventure. Next morning the other three boys turned out at half-past five, leaving Tom to get up when he felt like it, for he was the boss. When he came out on deck they were surprised to see the visitor anchored in the channel of the cove.

"What the dickens brings her here, I want to know?" asked Mike. "Faith, she has no right in the creek."

Then Ned recollected the agreement Tom made with Harry Gibson, and surmised that this was his sloop. He told Mike and Billy he guessed it was all right, and the three went about their morning duties without giving the Yerba Buena any further attention. No one was stirring aboard of her, all hands except the cook having been up till after three. Tom didn't turn out till he was called to breakfast at half-past six. He made no mention of what had happened during the night. He gave out orders for the morning's work, and then said he was going to the city on business. The earliest train for Oakland stopped at the station at half past nine, and Tom was on hand when it came in. Gibson and his well-dressed associate came running up just as it was starting and jumped on the rear platform of the last car. Tom was seated in the next car and did not see them. They took seats in the last car and were not aware he was on the train. Gibson, however, piped him off on board the ferryboat just after she started to cross the bay.

"Hello, Decker!" he exclaimed, slapping him on the shoulder. "Did you come down on the train from the cove?"

"Yes," replied Tom, somewhat surprised to see the opium smuggler. "Did you come by that train, too? I didn't see you at the station."

"What makes you think I came by that train?" said Gibson, looking hard at the boy.

"Why, I saw your sloop lying in the cove when

I got up this morning. You came down on her, I suppose, and are on your way to the city."

"Yes, I brought the sloop there about midnight. We were down to the mouth of the Guadalupe fishing, and on our way up we put in at the cove. The vessel will lie there till I want to use her again," said Gibson.

"You're a good liar," thought Tom.

Gibson then introduced Tom to his friend, who answered to the name of Mowbray.

"Where are you bound, Decker?" he asked.

"To the city on business," answered Tom.

"Is that a new purchase of yours on the ways? I didn't see her there the day I was down and made the deal with you."

"Yes, I brought her over from the city yesterday afternoon."

"Going to patch her up and sell her?"

"That's my idea."

"Come in to the bar and have a drink."

"I don't indulge, Mr. Gibson."

"That's so. I forgot. Well, take a cigar. You don't have to smoke it."

Tom accompanied them to the bar and stood treat in his turn. Then they walked to the front of the boat.

"What do you think of my sloop?" said Gibson.

"She's a fine little boat," admitted Tom.

"You can gamble on it she is. She's the smartest craft of her size in the bay."

"She looks like a speedy vessel."

"Oh, she can go some when she has the wind."

In due time the ferryboat ran into her slip, and the three landed with the rest of the passengers. They walked up Market street to Battery, and then Tom said he'd have to leave them. An empty hack came up from the ferry, and Gibson hailed it.

"So-long, Decker," he said, taking Mowbray by the arm.

Tom started along Battery street.

"I'm suspicious of that chap," said Gibson to his companion. "I have an idea it was his footsteps the cook found on the deck this morning. They led, as you know, to the skylight. We thought no one saw the sloop when we put in at the cove. He might have been awake and saw us. Who knows but he watched Jenkins and Pratt taking the packages ashore? If he did, the landing of the opium aroused his suspicions and brought him off to the sloop to see what he could find out. If he spied on us through the skylight, he knows all and has us in his power."

"We have no evidence that he did," said Mowbray. "The footsteps might not have been his."

"But somebody make them—some boy about his size. If it was one of the other lads, he told Decker whatever he heard and saw."

"And you suspect he intends——"

"I more than suspect. I am almost sure he is bound for the custom house to give us away."

"That would spell ruin for us," said Mowbray, in a panic.

"It certainly would. We'd all go to jail and the sloop would be seized."

"But he can't know where the packages are hidden. The government couldn't hold us without actual proof that we smuggled the drug into this port."

"Whether he knows where the stuff is hidden

or not, if he overheard our talk in the cabin he will tell all the facts. On the strength of his story the steward of the Oceanic will be arrested, and custom inspectors will go down to the cove and hunt the place over till they find the opium. Then they'll have us."

"What are you going to do? If you thought he was bound to the custom house, why did you let him go?"

"What could I do? If I had tried to stop him it would have made a scene, and what excuse could I give for stopping him?"

"Let us follow him and see if he goes there."

"I intend to do better. I intend to head him off in front of the custom house if I find he is bound there. That's why I hailed this hack. Come now, get in. We will make our plans on the way."

Gibson directed the driver to take them to the corner of Sansome and Washington streets, and got in after his companion. The jehu whipped up his team, drove up Bush street one block, and then turned down Sansome. It was straight sailing from there to their destination. When the cab drew up at the corner, Gibson leaned out and told him to go a bit further, and stopped him at the right spot. The two men, who had decided on a daring plan in case they found that the boy was surely going into the custom house, waited to see if the young wrecker would appear. As Tom was bound for that place, he came along in due course. As he was about to enter the building, Mowbray tapped him on the shoulder. Tom was astonished to see him after leaving him and Gibson on the corner of Market street. Before he could say anything, Mowbray said:

"Gibson wants to speak to you a moment."

"Gibson does?" said Tom, in surprise. "Where is he?"

"He's in that hack. Come over, he won't detain you a minute."

Tom, not suspecting what was in store for him, walked over.

"I want you to go up to the corner of Montgomery street with me, Decker," said Gibson.

"What for?"

"To help me with a little matter of business. It won't take over fifteen minutes, and it will be a great favor."

Tom hesitated. Gibson grabbed him by the arm.

"Come on. I'm in a hurry," he said.

Mowbray gave him a gentle push, and between the two Tom found himself in the hack and the door closed. Gibson's companion sprang up beside the driver and told him to drive on to Pacific street, and straight up that street to Dupont. As the hack got in motion, Gibson pulled out a rag saturated with a drug and pressed it over Tom's face. It was a powerful Chinese preparation, and before the boy could put up any kind of a struggle he was dead to the world.

CHAPTER VI.—Penned In A Cellar.

Tom did not recover his senses for many hours. When he did come to he found himself in a cellar, the atmosphere of which reeked with the vilest of odors. Instinctively he realized that he

was in some part of Chinatown, for nowhere else could one met with such a combination of villainous smells. The stench was peculiarly Chinese, and Tom had been around the surface of Chinatown enough to catch the prevailing smell of the district. That smell was the sweetest part of the rank atmosphere he was now compelled to breathe. Bad as it was, there were worse smelling spots in the underground depths of Chinatown. Tom realized that he was a prisoner, for he was bound to a post in a sitting posture. At first he was puzzled why Gibson had treated him in such a high-handed way, for his visit to the Yerba Buena had not been detected. Neither had he been caught watching the two men burying the packages of opium. But while thinking the matter out, it struck him that Gibson and his friend had, for reasons known to themselves, followed him in the hack to the custom house, and, suspecting his purpose in going there, had adopted the daring plan they had so successfully worked to prevent him giving information to the government people.

"Those men are clearly more wide awake than I took them to be, and are taking no chances of discovery," he thought. "They've brought me to some Chinese den—maybe the cellar of Sam Wong's place of business—and here I am to be kept until they decide what to do with me. It's tough luck. I was an easy mark for them, and it makes me mad to think how I walked right into the trap they laid for me."

At that moment a door opened and a Chinaman appeared on a platform with a light. Half a dozen wooden steps led down from the platform to the floor of the cellar. The Chinaman came down the steps and walked over to Tom. He bent down and held the light to the boy's face.

"Melican boy feelee all light 'gain?" he said, seeing that the prisoner was in possession of his senses. "Gettee ovey dlug velly soon," and the yellow rascal grinned as Chinamen are wont to do on occasions. "'Pose leady to talkee, eh?" added the Chink, in his sing-song fashion.

"Yes, I'm ready to talk. P'raps you'll tell me who you are, and why I am here tied to this post?"

"Me velly honest Chinaman, name Sam Wong. Keepee sto'e upstai' on stleet."

"Well, if you're an honest Chinaman, you'll cut me free and show me the way out of this pestiferous cellar."

"Velly solly me no able to do lat. Me feel velly bad dat me no able to 'blige Melican boy. Me likee find out whatee you know 'bout opium mattee."

"What are you talking about?" said Tom, deeming it wise to profess complete ignorance on the subject.

"No foolee. Bettie tell, then lettee go."

Tom knew better than to trust a Chinaman's word.

"I have nothing to tell," he said. "I don't know what you are getting at."

"You no sabbe, eh? No foolee Sam Wong. Cuttee eye teeth long 'go. Tellee how much know 'bout opium mattee. 'Pose you tellee all me cuttee lope, lettee go. No tellee, me go, come back bimeby."

"I've got nothing to tell about any opium business. I don't deal in the stuff. I'm a wrecker."

"You leckee? Likee stay lere? Allee light. Me come back blimeby talkee 'gain. No opee mouth, no gettee 'way. Sabee?"

Tom understood, and said he couldn't help it, as he had nothing to tell. The Chinaman evidently thought him very stubborn, and gave up his first attempt in disgust. He clattered off toward the stairs, and Tom was alone once more.

"I wouldn't have gained anything by telling that yellow rascal what I know about Gibson's smuggling business. Gibson told him to come here and pump me if he could. The moment he said his name was Sam Wong I knew who I had to deal with. He is a dealer in opium, and gets as much of his stock as he can on the quiet without having to pay the high duty, though I dare say he has to pay Gibson a good price for it just the same."

An hour passed away, by which Tom had got somewhat accustomed to the rank atmosphere of the cellar. Then Sam Wong made his appearance again and asked Tom if he was ready to "talkee." Tom returned him the same answer, and he retired as before, saying he would come again bimeby. By this time it was late in the afternoon, close upon five o'clock, and Tom, not having eaten anything since early morning, was tremendously hungry. When Sam Wong came the third time at six o'clock, Tom asked him if he wasn't going to produce some foot. The Chinaman grinned. He gave Tom to understand that food was contingent upon his making a clean breast of what he knew about the opium matter. The boy told him angrily he'd see him to the end of San Francisco first.

"Hi ya! You knowee. Givee se'f 'way," cried the Chinaman. "Now telle, I bling you loast beef, flied potato, lassbelly puddin', allee samee fine lay-out."

"Go to thunder! I'll starve first," roared Tom.

"Allee light. Changee tune bimeby. Me comee once more. No telle, no comee 'gain till to-morrow. Sabbe?"

Sam Wong grinned in an ugly way and took his departure. This time he stayed away two hours. When he came on the scene again he was accompanied by another yellow rascal whose face wore a wicked look. The Celestial bore a japaned tray on which was a plate of roast beef, two boiled potatoes, bread and butter, coffee and rice pudding, which had come from a cheap nearby restaurant. The tray was held under Tom's nose so he could smell the food. As he was desperately hungry by this time, it looked like a banquet to him. Sam Wong told him that the meal was his on the conditions already mentioned. Tom, however, was grit to the backbone. He defied the opium vendor in terms that left no doubt he meant what he said. Sam Wong no longer grinned. His disappointment made him bad-humored. He threatened Tom with worse treatment than he had so far experienced, but the boy wouldn't give in.

"Allee light. Me fixee you to-morrow. Takee glub 'way," he said to the other.

As the fellow rose to his feet the knife on the tray slipped off and landed in Tim's lap without either of the Chinamen observing the circumstance. Sam Wong abused Tom roundly, and

then followed his assistant out of the cellar. Tom's hands were not secured behind his back, but to his sides. During the hours he had been conscious he had managed to work one of them half loose. When the knife dropped upon his thighs he didn't notice what had hit him. He could feel the object resting there, and did not attempt to investigate till the two Chinamen had gone away. Then he worked his hand around and felt of it. When he saw it was a knife his heart gave a jump, for it suggested a chance for him to make his escape.

He found that it was fairly sharp, and, seizing it by the handle, he turned the edge upon the lowest of the cords that bound him. It proved an awkward job to work the knife on the rope. He couldn't get enough purchase on the knife to achieve quick results. Indeed, he was an hour working and resting before the cord snapped. That, however, was only the beginning, as the other cords still held taut. It took half an hour more to cut the second one. That gave Tom the chance to work his hand into his pocket and get out his jack-knife, which had sharp blades. With the assistance of his pocket-knife he soon freed himself entirely from the post and stood up free. Striking a match, he looked around the cellar. It was a filthy place, littered with small, broken tea chests, and other thin wooden boxes which had come from China. There were piles of the lead casings that went with the boxes, which probably were intended to be sold. There were also empty packages that smelled strongly of opium. After taking a good look at the place, and ascertaining that the only way out was by way of the stairs, Tom took that road, expecting to find the door bolted.

This proved to be the case. The door was somewhat loose on its hinges, and that made the bolt loose. With the point of his knife Tom worked the bolt softly back and opened the door. After passing through he rebolted the door. If he got away without discovery he had no doubt that Sam Wong would be much puzzled to account for his escape from the cellar. He was now in a passage filled with the ordinary Chinese odors. Following it, he came to a door that opened into a tea store. Peering into the place, Tom saw two Chinamen, but neither was Sam Wong. The street was straight ahead, where Chinamen were passing and repassing the doorway with their hands under their blouses. A bold rush would enable Tom to reach it; but the two Chinamen would be certain to raise an alarm, for probably they would mistake him for a crook who had sneaked into the store and stolen something. With so many Chinamen about, he stood a chance of being caught and detained.

As one of the store Chinks was the forbidding rascal who had carried the tray of food to him in the cellar, he would be recognized, and speedily forced to return to his prison. Nevertheless, he felt he would have to take the risk. He was strong and active, and he believed he was a match for several Chinamen with his fists where he had plenty of room to swing them and dodge about. He was about to make the rush, when several Chinamen entered the store, not to purchase tea or spices, but to get a supply of opium. They hung around the middle of the store and

blocked his contemplated rush. So he waited till they should have departed. They appeared to be in no hurry to go, even after having been waited on, and talked to the two store men in sing-song Chinese. Time was passing and Tom grew impatient. Suddenly the forbidding looking Chinaman lighted a lantern and came toward the door behind which Tom stood. The passage was dark, but there was no place for him to hide from a light. He knew the Chinaman was bound for the cellar, and his first thought was to step back and smash the fellow when he came into the passage. That, however, was bound to raise a big disturbance and bring all the other Celestials to the spot to find out what was the matter. He quickly decided to retire to the end of the passage opposite the cellar door, and trust to luck that the Chink wouldn't look that way. This he did.

In another moment the rascally Mongolian came into the passage with the lantern. Had he looked toward Tom the light would easily have revealed the boy's figure standing in a corner. Fortunately he did not. His thoughts were on the cellar, and he went directly to the door, drew the bolt and entered the place. As the door banged to behind him, the thought occurred to Tom that by shoving the bolt into place he would make the rascal a prisoner in the cellar. He wouldn't remain long there, for he was bound to make a tremendous racket on the door to get out. He would also be wild over the prisoner's escape. However, he would be held long enough to prevent him interfering where he was not wanted. Accordingly, Tom slipped over to the door, shot the bolt, and then entered the store. The bunch of Chinamen had just left. The one remaining clerk was busy piling some boxes on a shelf, and did not take any notice of the boy as he made for the door until he had nearly reached it. Then he turned around and said:

"Whattée want?"

"You keepee Oolong tea?" said Tom, stopping for a moment.

"Yep."

"How muchee case?"

Before the clerk could answer there came a banging in the rear. Tom knew it was the imprisoned rascal trying to get out. The clerk made a dash for the passage, and Tom darted out into the street.

Tom traversed one street after another until he was sure he had lost all chance of pursuit, then he entered a restaurant and sat down to a good meal, which he was greatly in need of. Coming out on the street again he started for the cove, which he reached shortly after midnight. He saw the Yerba Buena anchored in the same spot with a lantern lighted aloft. Some distance from her, and rapidly approaching the yacht, was a low, dirty brown sloop. Tom thought this was probably Sam Wong's boat, in which he expected to carry away the stolen opium. Tom stood in the shadow of two trees on the bluff and watched the boat's approach. The black sloop glided up to the Yerba Buena and Tom saw Sam Wong step on the deck of Gibson's boat. Evidently a consultation was taking place there. Soon he saw Jenkins and a sailor put off from Gibson's boat in a rowboat toward the shore, land, and start

for the place where the opium packages were buried.

Tom felt that he must get over to the schooner by some means or other. He had several revolvers on board, and he felt the boys and himself could put up quite a bold bluff with these weapons. So he made all possible haste to his quarters on the schooner, which he reached in a short time. Rapping on the door of the cabin, it was opened by Mike presently, who exclaimed:

"By the piper, have yez got back? It is late for you to show up."

Tom cautioned him to keep quiet and arouse the boys. After this was done and while his companions were dressing, Tom explained matters, and how he intended to keep Sam Wong from getting away with the buried opium. He also told them how he had been imprisoned in Sam Wong's cellar by Gibson and his gang, and how he escaped. The boys listened with great interest to all that was said. Ned now put in with:

"How are you going to stop them people from getting away with the opium?"

"Why, let the Chinaman get the packages on board their boat and when they sail away follow them in our working boat. She is faster than the Mongolian's and will catch her before she gets to the city."

"What about Gibson seeing us and chassing us in his sloop, which is faster than ours?"

"We will not start until after those on board the Yerba Buena have gone below," said Tom.

Tom's companions agreed with him, so his plan was decided upon.

CHAPTER VII.—Capture of the Junk.

The boys watched the transfer of the opium packages from the shore to the Chinese sloop. Two trips in the small boat sufficed to finish the job. The two sailors returned to the Yerba Buena, and five minutes later Sam Wong rejoined his own people and the holding line of the junk was cast off from the cleat on the stern of the anchored sloop. The lumbering shrimp-catcher drifted slowly away until her skipper and his helper hoisted the lateen sail, when her helm was pushed to port and her bowsprit swung around to the north. Then she slowly gathered way and sailed out of the cove. As the wind had dropped a good bit since her arrival she made slow progress through the water, much to Tom's satisfaction. Whatever speed she might be capable of in a rattling breeze, she was certainly slower than molasses when the wind was light. The bunch aboard the Yerba Buena watched her till she was clear of the cove, then Gibson and his two sailors went down into the cabin, leaving the deck quite clear.

"Now is our chace," said Ned, eagerly.

"We must wait till that old tub gets further away—well out of earshot of the cove," said Tom. "The Chinamen would see us leave the cove, and even if we didn't head for them right away, Sam Wong would suspect there was trouble in the wind, and the first thing he'd do would be to signal an alarm to Gibson. We must let him get far enough away to prevent anything like that. The Yerba Buena looks as

if she could travel in a light wind, and I don't want to have a brush with the Gibson crowd if I can avoid it."

Accordingly the boys made no move for the present. It was just as well they did not, for in a few minutes Jenkins and Pratt came up out of the cabin and stood for a couple of minutes looking after the receding junk, then they went forward and disappeared through a scuttle in the bows. The boys watched the Yerba Buena, thinking Gibson might come into the cockpit of his craft, too, but he didn't, and while they looked the light faded from the bull's eyes and skylight of the cabin, indicating that the sloop owner had turned in.

"Now we'll get busy," said Tom, pushing the slide of the cabin door wide open and stepping out.

His companions followed and the door was closed and padlocked on the outside. They took off their shoes and stockings, turned up their trouser's legs and jumped down on the stand. They unhitched the skiff and Mike pushed her out to the water's edge, the others following through the mud. It didn't take them long to reach the sloop. Her sails were quickly hoisted, her mooring rope cast off and, with the skiff towing behind, she slipped out of the cove. Tom stood at the tiller and laid her course in shore. The junk was out toward the middle of the bay where the Chinamen could get all the wind there was, which wasn't a great deal. They could see her lumbering along, and confident that the little sloop could catch her, Tom decided to run ahead of her on his present course. If the Mongolians made the sloop out they would have no suspicion that the persons aboard of her had any designs on them until the time for the boys to close in upon them. For the present there was nothing to do but let matters take their course. In the course of a half hour the boys would be able to tell how much faster their boat was than the junk.

Having nothing to do, Tom's three assistants in turn hoisted aboard a bucket of water and cleaned the mud off their feet and legs, and resumed their stockings and shoes. Then Ned took the tiller to give Tom a chance to do likewise. An hour passed, during which Tom altered his course to a parallel one with the junk to get a sure line of the ability of the sloop to win the chase. The little boat at the end of that time had demonstrated that she had the heels of the Chinese craft, for she had crawled up on a line with her. Both boats were headed the same way with at least half a mile of water between them.

There could be no doubt that the Mongolians had long since made out the sloop, but there was nothing in her actions to arouse their alarm. So matters remained for another half hour. The sloop was well ahead of the shrimp-catcher, and Tom had hauled her a point nearer the latter's course. There was nothing suspicious in that fact if the Chinamen noticed it.

"We've got her dead to rights now," said Ned.

"It looks like it, but I don't believe in counting my chickens before they are hatched," replied Tom.

"Why she can't escape us to save her life. We're far enough ahead now for us to cut across

her bow. If we keep on longer on this tack we'll run too far away from her."

"I'm working her over by degrees."

"I see you are, but what's the use of any more strategy? If you head for the middle of the long bridge toward Potrero you'll close in with her if she doesn't alter her course."

"I'd rather wait till daylight begins to lighten things up a bit before bringing matters to a conclusion."

"How long will that be, do you suppose?"

"About an hour. Tie the end of that bucket rope to this cleat and drop the bucket over so it will act as a drag."

His order was executed and after that the sloop gained nothing on the junk. All the time the boys were drawing nearer at an angle to the Chinamen.

"Hello!" cried Billy, suddenly, "the Chinks have a sweep out on either side to get more speed on. They're in a hurry to get to the city."

Tom looked and as soon as he saw the dip of the starboard sweep on the junk he ordered Ned to get in the bucket.

"Pull the skiff around to the starboard quarter and make her fast there," was his next order.

This was done, then Tom brought the sloop's bows to a sharper angle with the junk's course. The two boats were now only a quarter of a mile apart, converging toward each other. If both boats held on as they were going the sloop would cross the junk's bows within a biscuit's toss. Sam Wong, watching the small craft bearing across his course, saw nothing suspicious in her deportment. The eastern sky was lightening up a little, heralding the coming of day-break.

"Get your revolvers ready for business," said Tom. "Chinamen, as a rule, are deadly afraid of a gun. Whether Sam Wong is I can't say. I fancy he's a tough rascal when he's driven into a corner. There must be \$1,000 worth of opium aboard that junk. If not more, and he's going to put up a fight to save it, particularly when he sees we are only boys and not custom house inspectors."

At that moment there came a puff of air over the western hills from the ocean.

"We'll have more wind in a few minutes. That will help the junk along some. Now that I have a good sight of the craft I recognize it as a fishing boat, one of the Chinese shrimp or salmon fleet. She's a whole lot faster than she looks in the hands of the Chinks who know how to handle her, but she's got to have wind to do her best, and even at that she's couldn't give us the slip under present circumstances though she's to the windward. She can't beat us to the point of the angle, but if they knew us to be an enemy, and had the wind, they'd put their helm down and run off toward the long bridge."

"What good would that do them? The tide isn't up yet. They'd ground on the mud this side of the bridge," said Ned.

"That won't happen this trip. We are now close aboard of her, and she still holds her course, which shows they have no suspicion of us."

"What are you going to do?"

"Swing around and bear down on her. The sudden movement will disconcert the rascals, and

before they can grasp what we are up to we will be on top of them."

"I see."

"Now then, Mike, grab the boat-hook and sneak forward with it. The moment the boats come together, lay hold of the junk and don't let the Chinks pry us apart."

"Troth I will," said Mike, with alacrity, proceeding to obey orders.

"You, Billy, remain in the cock-pit and look after the rudder when I drop it. Hen and I are going to board the junk and drive the Chinks below. Hold your revolver ready for emergencies."

The crisis was now at hand. The sloop was apparently about to cut across the junk's course at a distance that would just clear her. Sam Wong who was at the tiller, the skipper and his helper being engaged with the sweeps, let the junk fall away to make sure nothing would happen. Tom immediately pushed the tiller from him and the sloop's nose swung quickly around in the arc of a circle till she pointed direct at the junk's bow.

"Duck, fellows!" shouted Tom, as the boom swung across the cockpit.

A yell of consternation came from Sam Wong, which was echoed by the other two Celestials. Sam Wong ripped out a volley of pidgin-English, interlarded with swear words, directed at the four boys, whose apparent blundering at a critical moment threatened to mix things up. The yellow rascal shoved his big tiller the other way, and the lateen sail filling with the freshening breeze, the junk slipped around and off. That was just what Tom counted on him doing. It was the best thing the Chinaman could have done to avoid having his boat rammed, and showed that he was not rattled by the startling predicament he was so unexpectedly placed in. It was exactly what Tom wanted him to do, for he didn't want to run the junk down. The superior sped of the sloop brought the two boats broadside together with a bump.

"Hold them together," said Tom, passing the charge of the tiller over to Billy and springing aboard of the junk, accompanied by Hen.

The boarding of the two boys astonished and staggered the occupants of the shrimp-catcher. Sam Wong fired an imprecation at them in bad English.

"Drop that tiller and get below!" cried Tom, shoving his gun in the Chink's face.

"Drop those sweeps or I'll shoot you full of holes!" roared Hen, covering the skipper and his helper, who cowered at the sight of his revolver.

Sam Wong didn't budge. His evil-looking countenance expressed amazement as he recognized the boy who until that moment he supposed was still a prisoner in his cellar.

"Get below!" repeated Tom, sternly.

"No sabbee whatee mean?" replied Sam Wong, with a nasty leer.

"You'll be overboard and food for the fishes in two seconds more if you don't start yourself."

"No believe shootee. Me unarmed," said the yellow rascal, with another leer.

At the same time his hand went to his waist where the handle of his knife protruded. The scoundrel knew well enough that Tom had no

intention of shooting him, and as he was as quick and as lithe as a panther his purpose was to get his knife into the boy before he knew what was going to happen. And he would have succeeded, too, in spite of the fact that Tom's finger was on the trigger and the gun was pointed at his head, but for Billy, who was watching him. The knife was out like a streak and going for Tom's unprotected breast when the crack of Billy's gun stopped a tragedy. Billy had taken a hasty aim at Sam Wong's chest, but the movement of the boat changed the direction of the ball. It struck Sam Wong's hand and the knife clattered to the deck of the junk as its owner uttered a terrible yell of pain. The shot completed the terror of the skipper and his helper. They let go the sweeps and fell head over heels through the wide opening into the shallow hold.

"Get a line and throw it around this chap," said Tom to Ned.

There was small rope to burn about on the junk's deck. Ned picked up the piece that came handiest and had it around the wounded Celestial's arms and chest in a moment. Sam Wong started to struggle to free himself, but with Tom on top of him he had no show. He was quickly secured and shoved into the hold head first.

"Let go, Mike," cried Tom, going to the junk's tiller. "Fill away, Bill, and keep within hail. Ned, pitch those sweeps overboard."

The shrimp-catcher came up into the wind and Tom laid her course for the city, now fully revealed ahead in the dawn of the early morning.

CHAPTER VIII.—Disappearance of Gibson and His Sloop.

The two boats made the run to Washington street wharf in about three-quarters of an hour. Here they made fast to the end of the wharf, the sloop on the outside. The sun was just rising and at that early hour there were few persons astir even around the water front.

"Keep a close watch on those Celestials," said Tom to Ned. "I'm going up to the City Hall to notify the police."

Ned and the other two promised to see that their prisoners did not escape. Mike mounted guard over the entrance to the hold on the junk and saw to it that neither the skipper nor his helper came near the bound Sam Wong. Tom walked up Washington street to the alley in the rear of the basement of the City Hall, which in those days was on Kearny street, facing the Plaza, and entered a hall through a doorway. The Chief was not in the building at that hour, but that didn't matter, for Tom saw the man in charge of the desk and told him his story. Four officers were detailed to accompany the boy to the wharf—three to take possession of the prisoners, and one to remain in charge of the captured junk. The prisoners set up a howl when the officers appeared. The skipper insisted that he and his helper were honest fishermen and had done no wrong.

Sam Wong had nothing to say. He was smart enough to understand that he was caught with the goods and that all the argument in the world

would not avail him. To all questions put to him his invariable answer was "No sabbe." As far as he was concerned, Gibson and his associates were safe, for he wasn't giving out any information. Neither were the other Celestials. They were as dumb as oysters when the word opium was mentioned to them. Sam Wong's hand was badly shattered by Billy's bullet, but he stood the wound like a major. The prisoners were marched to the city prison. Tom and Ned counted the packages of opium and found there were fifty of them. What they were worth they had no idea, but as the drug was expensive in the city they judged that their value was considerable. It would be quite a haul for the Custom House, but as Tom was responsible for the capture he would be entitled to half of what the stuff brought at public sale. The boys went to breakfast at a cheap restaurant on the water front in pairs.

The Custom House people were duly notified and men came down to the wharf to take charge of the junk and the smuggled opium. To them Tom told his story and he was informed that he would receive his reward in due course. The Mongolians were brought before a United States marshal. Tom told his story again, and his companions added what they knew about the case. A revenue cutter was sent down to the cove to take charge of the Yerba Buena and arrest all hands. Tom and his associates were directed to remain at the wharf until they received permission to go. As Tom had been up all night he was dead tired and he turned in for a sleep. His three helpers also turned in to finish their interrupted night's repose. The revenue cutter failed to find the Yerba Buena in the cove. She had left that morning for Alviso Landing at the southern extremity of the bay. She reached her new anchorage about one o'clock, and Gibson went ashore and got a rig to take him to San Jose. At that town he took a Southern Pacific train for San Francisco, reaching the city about five o'clock.

Then he learned from the papers what had happened, and how the young wrecker was at the bottom of the capture. The steward of the steamer had been arrested and had waived examination in the United States District Court. He was released under heavy bail, which was furnished by his friends. Gibson knew better than to go near his house. He had no doubt it was under watch. He had plenty of funds for he had the gold he received from Sam Wong for the opium. He immediately provided himself with an effective disguise and registered at the Eureka Lodging House on Commercial street. The money he deposited in two savings banks under an assumed name. In the meanwhile the revenue cutter cruised around the vicinity of the cove, looked in at Alameda and other places and finally returned to the city and her commander sent in his report and asked for further instructions. As it was thought that the Yerba Buena might have gone up the Sacramento River the cutter was ordered to go up that stream and look in at all the ports on both sides. Tom received permission to return to the cove, but was told to hold himself in readiness to return when wanted. The boys wondered how the sloop came to leave the cove so suddenly.

It did not seem possible that Gibson had learned of the capture of the junk in time to get his vessel away before the cutter went after her. However, the fact remained that she had made a sudden change of base, and her whereabouts since appeared involved in mystery. The boys reached the cove in time for Mike, with the help of Billy, to get supper by dark, and by nine o'clock they were in bed. Next morning Tom and Ned resumed work on the old sloop, while Mike and Billy continued the dismantling of the wreck they had in hand. Gibson went back to San Jose that morning and made his way to the landing. His men did not recognize him, but he soon disclosed his identity to them. He brought with him a paper containing the story of the capture of the junk and her cargo of opium. He told his men that a revenue cutter was looking for the sloop, and that for the present they were safe as she had gone up the Sacramento River. He sent Jenkins and Pratt to San Jose for paint and other things to work a change in the looks of the Yerba Buena. The gilt-raised letters were done away with on her stern, and after the hull was painted black with a red streak the name "Molly Bawn" was inscribed in white characters of some size. Jenkins also assumed a disguise and was directed to pose as her owner and skipper. He secured a cargo of fruit to be delivered to a San Francisco commission merchant, and the metamorphosed chaft sailed without Gibson, who returned by train.

The rest of the week passed without event to the boys at the cove. The entire port side of the old sloop was made fairly stanch and on Monday, when Tom and Ned got to work on the starboard side, Mike and Billy went to work caulking the port side with tarred oakum. By the end of the week, during which Tom heard nothing more from the revenue people, the sloop was ready to return to her natural element, having received two coats of black paint and a white streak to relieve it. Mike and Billy had cleaned her sheathing and brightened it up while Tom and Ned were painting the cabin in white and gilt. Her sails were old, but were still serviceable. She was slid back into the water at high tide and anchored near the working sloop. Then Tom went to the city and placed an advertisement in two of the newspapers offering her for sale or hire. He returned and reported that the Yerba Buena had not been found yet by the revenue authorities.

"I don't see how she could have avoided capture unless she left the port altogether and went up or down the coast to some place unknown," said Ned.

"She must have got out at night in a fog, then, for a watch was kept for her in that direction," said Tom.

"Everybody seems to have suffered in this affair but Gibson and his own crowd. He's a pretty slick chap, I guess."

"You can gamble on it that he is," said Tom.

"He's bound to be caught in the long run," said Billy.

"There is no certainty about it. I have no doubt his sloop will be found, but I won't venture to say that he will be."

Another week passed away and the derelict

the boys had been working on was entirely wiped out, and all her iron and metal found their way to the city. Only the best part of her timbers remained piled up in the sun, the rest having been reduced to firewood and delivered to the wood yard. The next thing Tom turned his attention to was the demolishing of an ancient bark which had lain many years half imbedded in the sand of the cove. Tom's late relative once told him that she went ashore there in a norther and he bought her for a song. Nothing had been done with this derelict in his time, and as she was fast rotting to pieces Tom decided to break her up while there was the chance of getting something better than firewood out of her.

Gibson, in the meanwhile, hadn't forgotten that he owed the exposure of his smuggling business to Tom Decker. Owing to that lad's pernicious activity, as he called it, he was forced to go about in disguise, and keep away from his home and his regular haunts. Even under these circumstances he was constantly in danger of some one recognizing him and giving him away. The only gleam of sunshine in his cloudy sky was the possession of the money Sam Wong paid him for the opium. Half of this rightfully belonged to the steward, and a quarter of the balance to his friend Mowbray, who had gone East to avoid arrest as an accessory before the fact.

The steward scoured the town to find him, for he wanted to get his part of the money to pay a lawyer to attend to his defence, but he was not successful in finding him. No one recognized the sloop Molly Bawn as the former Yerba Buena, especially as she was now being used in carrying fruit from Alviso Landing to the city. Jenkins and Pratt took care to wear disguises that so far proved effective. The Custom House people, after looking all over the bay, when the trip up the Sacramento and tributary streams proved abortive, were satisfied that the Yerba Buena took time by the forelock and slipped out of the harbor before the hunt for her was fairly begun. Sam Wong had got out of jail on bail and returned to his store, which had been thoroughly inspected during his short absence, but without the Government finding anything more against him.

He was an angry Mongolian, for he was out \$2,000 in gold, and up against the prospect of a heavy fine and imprisonment to boot. His rage naturally turned against the boy who was the cause of his misfortunes, and he determined to do him up. He had a good deal of influence among the worst of the rascally Chinamen of the city—every man of whom was more or less closely identified with the murderous order known by the name of the Highbinders. The fiendish instincts of the almost extinct Thugs of India had nothing on this secret combination, which had become a dangerous pest in California, and terrorized good and bad Chinamen alike, levying tribute after the fashion of the Italian Black Hand, though the practice of using explosives to enforce their demands had not come into fashion among them. Their weapons were the knife and revolver, and the police laid every murder committed within the Chinese precincts at their door.

The order was divided into "tongs," or branch sections, all owing allegiance to the head organization, which had assembly rooms somewhere

in Chinatown. A serious feature of the case was the fact that it was no secret that the machinery of the courts was utilized to shield this class of criminals rather than punish them. Justice was hampered by the slow action of the police courts, and the perjured testimony of both white and Chinese, which was purchased with money supplied from the treasuries of the Highbinder societies. It was also known that a number of reputable merchants in Chinatown were members of various tongs, having joined the organization for the protection against what they termed "rough collections."

They considered it cheaper to pay the regular dues of from \$2.50 to \$5 a month than to be called upon to produce \$500 at the point of a pistol. Sam Wong was an influential member of the Chee King Tong, and as he did not deem it prudent to be identified with any effort to squelch an important witness in the Government case against him he sought counsel with the leaders of his society for the purpose of removing Tom Decker from this earthly sphere. As Tom was a white man it was first suggested that he be approached with a bribe. This Sam Wong objected to. He said it was a doubtful expedient, and he was after revenge more than anything else—nothing would satisfy him but the boy's death. So a couple of emissaries were selected to wind Tom up.

In the meantime work went along at the cove with a rush. Tom had succeeded in selling the repaired sloop for a good sum. One day when Tom had sailed his sloop to the city with a load of metal to the junkshops and he was going on board again he saw two Chinamen aboard of her. Asking them what they wanted, they said they wanted him to take them as passengers as far as San Leandro. Tom said he did not take passengers on his boat, and advised them to go by railroad. Suddenly without any forewarning the Chinamen threw themselves on the boy and bore him to the deck, after which they pressed some drug to his nostrils and he became unconscious. Then they hauled Tom into the forward compartment and shut down the scuttle cover. The Chinamen now unmoored the sloop, hoisted the sails and in a little while the sloop was well out in the bay. The Chinamen were in such high glee with their successful venture that they failed to notice a certain thing that was happening at the forward scuttle.

The top of the scuttle had moved back, and a pair of bright eyes set in a shaggy, bearded face were peering at them.

The face belonged to a human derelict who, while prowling about the wharves of the city, had come upon Tom Decker's sloop, and circumstances being propitious, he had tried to break into the cabin.

Foiled in this by the stoutness of the lock, the derelict had tackled the lock of the scuttle cover and broken it.

He had crawled into it and was trying to see what he could pick up there that he could dispose of readily, when the two Chinamen came down and stepped aboard.

Fearing the consequences of discovery, he had remained out of sight, hoping the Celestials would go away,

But they didn't, and then Tom appeared.

He saw what happened to the young wrecker, and kept out of the way when the boy was tumbled into his quarters.

With the closing of the scuttle cover, and the sailing of the boat, the derelict was all up in the air, and the sloop was off Alcatraz Island before he ventured to try the scuttle, and finding it not secured, peered out.

The derelict's acquaintance with bad Chinamen was not extensive, but he knew they were dangerous when they had the upper hand.

The derelict had tried to bring the boy to his senses, but the smell that hung about his face soon convinced the tramp that the lad was drugged.

The derelict, after inspecting the situation outside, saw that the boat was not crossing the bay toward San Leandro, or any other town in that direction.

She was already in the upper bay, and her pre-est course was likely to carry her into San Pablo Bay.

The question was where were they going?

Probably to some place where they would meet more of their race.

The tramp did not fancy the idea of being thrown among a bunch of heathens who might take umbrage at his taking the liberty of helping himself to a free sail.

The derelict tried once more to revive his young companion, but without success.

He gave the job up and fumbled around the little forward hold for some weapon with which to defend himself.

His hand lighted on a box of matches, and he struck a lucifer.

Before doing that he closed the scuttle tight lest the flash of light attract the notice of the Chinks.

He already knew there was a stove and a few cooking utensils in the place; now he saw many other things.

Something bright on a shelf attracted his attention.

A closer examination showed him that it was the butt of a revolver.

His eyes glistened when he saw it was fully loaded.

He would be able to stand the Chinamen off now, for he knew there were great persuasive powers in a six-shooter.

Darkness presently fell, and by that time the sloop was close to San Rafael Creek, which was the way by water to the town of San Rafael.

It was not the purpose of the yellow rascals to go to the town.

They knew the locality like a book, and what a fine place it was to pull off a quiet murder and effectually dispose of the body of their victim.

The creek ran through wide-stretching marshes, off which were small sloughs that emptied into it.

It was difficult to navigate on a falling tide, while at low tide it was impossible to navigate at all.

The Chinamen knew that the tide was up, and they would have no great trouble getting about in the marsh far enough to accomplish their purpose, which was to tie some heavy object to the drugged boy and sink him in the ooze of the reeds.

Just how the Mongolians managed to hit the

mouth of the creek right off the reel in the misty air showed their intimate acquaintance with the vicinity.

They sailed up the creek for a short distance, and then headed into the mouth of a slough.

Finally the Mongolians decided they had gone far enough.

They let the mainsail down with a run, and in half a minute the sloop ran softly alongside of the bank.

Then they stepped forward and got their victim.

CHAPTER IX.—Nemesis.

The foremost Chinaman shoved open the slide, jumped down and collided with the derelict. He naturally supposed it was the boy's body, and he seized it with both his arms. A tough, hairy fist shot through the darkness, and the Mongolian got a clout in the face that knocked him silly. His companion, waiting above, heard the rumpus, and jabbered down to him, asking in Chinese what the trouble was. As he started to jabber back in great excitement, the butt of the revolver landed on the side of his head and he went to sleep at once. Having disposed of one of the rascals, the derelict felt that the other would be a picnic for him. He rose out of the hold like a hairy beast, and shoved the barrel of the revolver at the other Chink. It was not so dark but the Celestial caught sight of the gun in the hands of a hard-looking apparition. With a cry of terror he started back, lost his balance and fell backward into the turbid waters of the slough. His second yell was cut short by the closing of the water over his head. When he came up he was some yards from the boat, and he swam for the bank.

The bank, though low, was steep, and as slippery as the back of a well-greased pig. The Mongolian exhausted himself in fruitless efforts to climb out at different points. He clutched desperately at the tall grass, but there was no stability to them, and they bent in all directions. He turned over on his back and tried to float, but the effort was a failure. He went under, and, coming up, began swimming for dear life. No one knew better than he that his case was hopeless. Finally his legs got entangled in the grass, and his strength giving out, he gave one yell and went down to rise no more. He had met the fate he had mapped out for the young wrecker. The derelict, standing on the deck and listening to the splashing going on in the fog and swamp, heard his dying cry, and after that a death-like stillness settled over the slough, the sloop moving about under the slow action of the water, going nowhere, but never wholly at rest. "Where in thunder am I?" the tramp asked himself.

He struck a match, which showed a wavering blue light in the night air, but he could see nothing but an ocean of grass on all sides.

"If ever a chap was at sea, I am. When that Chink comes to his senses I must make him work the boat out of this. But can I trust him to take her to a decent place? What was their object in coming here and lowering the sail?"

He walked up and down the deck thinking it

over. Finally the action of the Chinaman in dropping into the hold and grabbing him, whose presence they were unaware of, gave the tramp a strong suspicion that the rascals had been about to throw the boy overboard when he interrupted the proceedings. The more he thought it over the more certain he became that such was the truth, and he was half inclined to send the senseless Mongolian to join his late companion in guilt. The dampness of the air drove him back into the narrow forward hold. The presence of the Chinaman there was distasteful to him. He didn't like the smell of the beast. So he yanked him up on deck, got a piece of rope and tied him hand and foot. There he left him to come to at his leisure and drew the cover half over. Nemesis had marked both of the highbinders for its own. The chilly night air revived the coolie, and before he had collected his confused thoughts he began struggling about on the deck, now slippery from the fog. The derelict heard him and paid no attention. The hold was comfortable and he wasn't inclined to leave it. He knew the Chinaman was helpless anyway. Suddenly there was a loud splash. The derelict opened the slide and looked out. The Mongolian was not visible where he had been left.

"The rascal has gone overboard," said the tramp, crawling out and looking over the sloop's side.

There was no sound other than the whisper of the night breeze through the grass. The inference was clear. The Chink had gone to the bottom, and being bound and helpless he stayed there. Had the derelict felt any great desire to save him that would have been impossible. The boat was moving around and he could not have located the spot where the drowning man lay any easier than one could find a needle in a hay rick.

"That's the end of him, and I can't say I'm sorry for him," said the tramp.

He returned to the hold and ten minutes later was sound asleep. He slept through the night and was still asleep when gray dawn broke over the lowlands and marshes. There was a movement, however, about this time in the hold close to him. Tom Decker had recovered his senses. Little did he dream how near death he had been that night, and that he owed his salvation to the ragged bundle of humanity snoring near him. Many of us have the same experience in other ways. Death breathes on us as he sweeps past on his garnering round, and we never know that some trifling happening kept us out of the reach of his scythe. Tom sat up and stared about in the gloom of the little hold.

"Where am I?" he asked himself.

Then he remembered the attack made upon him by the two Chinamen, and the drug that robbed him of his brains. As his eyes took in the streak of light above coming in through the partly open slide he became conscious that he was not alone. Having the full use of all his limbs, the first thing he did was to strike a match. Then he saw the sandy-haired gorilla asleep near him.

"Where did he come from?" Tom said, in surprise.

He saw he was in the forward hold of his

sloop, so not bothering with the tramp he crawled out on deck to see where the craft was. His surprise was great when he saw nothing but grass and water around. The two Chinamen, of course, were not aboard. He concluded they had sailed the boat across the bay and then abandoned her. But he did not recognize the locality as anywhere around San Leandro, where the Mongolians professed to be bound. He had no suspicions that the boat was in the upper bay. There wasn't light enough yet to give him a line on the locality. He was glad that the Chinamen were gone, for his experience with them assured him that they were a couple of bad ones. His thoughts returned to the tramp below. He figured that the fellow had found the boat lying somewhere along the shore and had come aboard of her to take a sleep. After he was aboard the sloop, not having been secured, had been wafted away by the rising tide.

That was his idea of the situation, and how wrong it was the reader knows. Tom left the tramp to awake at his leisure and going aft proceeded to open the cabin door. He saw that the lock had been monkeyed with and laid it to the derelict. He judged that the Chinamen had broken the lock of the scuttle cover in order to put him down there, and the tramp finding it open had availed himself of the circumstance. Doubtless the fellow had discovered him down there, but set him down as a brother tramp and did not try to awaken him. Tom decided to wait til it got light before trying to navigate his craft. He laid down in one of the bunks and fell asleep. The heavy tread of the tramp above his head aroused him. The sun was flashed on the skylight. It was time to be up and doing. He walked out and confronted the tramp.

"Oh, that's where you are," said the derelict, with a friendly grin. "I was afraid you had come out of your trance during the night and walked overboard like the Chinks who tried to do you."

Tom looked astonished.

"What do you know about those Chinamen?" he asked.

"I know a whole lot about them. They ran off with this boat and both of us from Pacific street wharf."

"Were you aboard then?"

"That's what I was, sonny. You can thank your stars I was, too, for I reckon I've saved your life."

"How?"

The derelict squatted down and told his story. Tom was truly astonished.

"Then we're in the upper bay?" he said, looking around.

"Somewhere up there, but blessed if I know where. There is nothin' but marsh grass around us."

"These must be the marshes around the San Rafael Creek."

"Mebbe so. The question is how are we going to get clear of the blame place. I'm no sailor."

"Don't worry. We'll get out. We're in one of the sloughs."

"You know the place, then?"

"It's a safe bet I'm right."

"S'pose you are, how are we going to get out? Can you sail a boat?"

"I guess I can. This is my craft."

"And I never thought of it. I'm feelin' my oats again. Let's get a move on."

"In a moment. I want to get through my head why those Chinamen brought me up here to throw me overboard. They might have tossed me into the bay."

"They might have tried to, but I would have stopped them."

"I realize that I owe my life to you, and you won't find me ungrateful. What is your name?"

"Jack Jones is the name on the police books."

"You're not a criminal, are you?"

"I dunno. When a fellow is down on his luck, with all the world against him, the police call him a sort of criminal."

"You mean a vagrant?"

"I'll allow that's what I am. I'm homeless, friendless and busted."

"You've got a friend in me and I'll see that you have a chance to rise."

"Thankee, sonny. Your offer is too good to refuse. I'm willin' to reform with half a chance. I'd like to know what you done to them Chinks that they tried to cut your breath short."

"I guess Sam Wong is behind it."

"Who's Sam Wong?"

Then Tom told his story about the opium smugglers, and the important part he had taken in frustrating their game.

"That settles it," said Jack Jones, whose real name was Jack Brady. "Sam Wong put the highbinders on you, and you escaped by the skin of your teeth. Better keep a sharp lookout that they don't get you the next time."

"You think they will try it again?"

"That's the way they do business."

"Then I shall notify both the police and the Revenue people."

"You'd better."

"It's time we left here. Help me hoist the sail."

Tom had no great trouble to find his way out into the creek and from there into the bay. There was a smart breeze blowing and they made a quick run to the city, where Tom made fast to the same wharf again. Then they went to a restaurant and had breakfast. After the meal Tom sent Bradley back to the sloop to await his return. He went to the Custom House and told the story of his night's adventure, making it appear that Sam Wong was at the bottom of it and that he wanted to get rid of the chief witness against him. An inspector was sent to interview Wong and tell him a thing or two. Tom then notified the chief of police that his life was in peril from the highbinders on account of his prominence in the smuggling affair. The chief promised to act in a way that would cause the society to call its feud off.

Tom then returned to the sloop and sailed for the cove, where he duly arrived. He told his three assistants what had happened to him, and how he owed his life to the hard-looking Jack Bradley. The derelict became a popular personage at the cove at once. He agreed to stay there and work with the crowd on the same terms. He proved a willing and industrious helper, and soon proved he was not a bad chap by any means. Thus ten days passed away and then a remarkable thing happened.

CHAPTER X.—Conclusion.

When the bark went ashore years since she had nothing aboard but a ballast of pig iron. Tom knew nothing about it till Mike, in digging down in the sand that half filled her hold came upon a couple of them. Iron was what Tom wanted more than anything else then, so when he saw the specimens he came to the conclusion they had formed the ballast of the vessel and quite a bit of it would be found if they dug for it. They had only two shovels, so Tom started his friends in pairs at the digging, each pair relieving the others every half hour. The sand was flung out through a big gap in the bark's bows. It took a whole day's work before the bulk of the pig iron at that end of the vessel was reached. Tom, owing to his strenuous adventure with the two men of the Tong, and fearful he might again be caught at disadvantage, carried his revolver about with him all the time. A good bit of the iron had been taken out when Mike came upon a box. He tried to lift it and found it very heavy. He stepped outside to report the matter to Tom.

"What's that? You've found a box amongst the pig iron?" said the young wrecker.

"Yis, and it's blazin' heavy, so it is," replied Mike.

Mike got a hatchet and a large chisel and knocked half the cover off. He and Tom uttered a cry of astonishment that brought the others around. The box was full of double eagles.

"Whew! that's a discovery and a half," said Ned.

At that moment Bradley shouted to Tom to come out, as a sloop had entered the cove and a boat, with three men in her, was coming ashore. The Molly Bawn, with Gibson aboard, left her wharf that morning and started for Alviso Landing. As she was passing the cove Gibson decided to run in there and try and kidnap Tom Decker. A boat was lowered, and with Gibson and his two men aboard started for the shore. It was then that Bradley notified Tom and he came out of the wreck. The young wrecker looked at the strangers, but in their disguise did not know them. The boat grounded and the three men sprang out of her.

"Back!" cried Tom, as Gibson came running toward him. "Back, or I'll shoot."

Ned and Billy seized the box of gold coin and started away with it on the run. Gibson came to a halt at the sight of the revolver in Tom's hands. Seeing that in addition to the boys Tom had a rather formidable-looking man at his back, he realized that the plan he had in mind couldn't be worked. So he returned to the boat, re-embarked, and in a short time the sloop was sailing out of the cove.

"I believe that was Gibson in disguise, and that sloop looks like the Yerba Buena painted in black, with a different name," said Tom.

The other boys were of the same opinion. As Billy and Ned were going over to the city with a load of iron that afternoon Tom decided to send a note to the revenue people, telling them about the black sloop which had gone down the bay. The note was written after dinner and

handed to Ned to be delivered. After supper the box of gold was brought out into the cabin and all hands took a shy at counting it. It footed up \$60,000.

"Whoever put it there must have lost track of it, or he would have been around years ago looking for it," said Tom.

The boys turned in in excellent humor that night. Next morning they resumed work on the wreck. Tom started early for the city with the gold. On his arrival he called an express wagon and carried the money to the California Bank where he made a special deposit of \$50,000 in his own name. The balance he took to the Germania Savings Bank and deposited \$2,500 to the credit of each of his helpers, bringing back the bank books with him and handing them over to the fortunate ones. Tom was troubled no more by the agents of the highbinders. Between the efforts of the police and the government people the Chee King Tong, with the sullen acquiescence of Sam Wong, hauled off the job.

The black sloop was taken possession of by the government and Jenkins and Pratt put under arrest. Gibson escaped, because he had left the sloop before the cutter followed her down the bay and caught her at Alviso Landing. Sam Wong and his two companions on the junk were tried on the charge of being accessories in a smuggling job, were convicted and the former was sentenced to pay a fine of \$1,000, while the latter were given a year in the penitentiary. The opium was sold and realized \$1,800, of which sum Tom Decker received one-half. Jenkins and Pratt were tried for their complicity in the smuggling business. The jury disagreed over a verdict, being four for conviction and eight for acquittal. Tom's uncorroborated testimony, was not considered sufficient, even backed up by the circumstantial evidence adduced, as well as the conviction of Sam Wong and his associates. As a matter of fact it was only the actual finding of the smuggled opium aboard the junk that convicted Wong.

Jenkins and his companion were not tried again, as the government was satisfied that conviction was out of the question. The steward of the steamer was let go because no actual evidence was found connecting him with the business. Had Gibson come back and stood trial he would probably have got off, too. Sam Wong, however, had not forgiven Tom Decker by any means. He aimed to get square with him. He waited until the smuggling case had been settled and then put a couple of highbinders on the job of doing up the young wrecker. In this instance he did not apply to the Tong for aid, but arranged with the two rascals on the quiet. After that a watch was kept on the boy's movements, when he came to the city on business. As Tom came over in the morning and returned to the cove before dark, and was never caught in a situation where he could be taken advantage of without discovery, he escaped harm.

Sam Wong grew impatient and told his hired assassins to go down to the cove and hang around till they finished their job. On the following night the two Mongolians were hiding in the brush of the bluff watching the lighted skylight of the stranded schooner. At nine o'clock the light went out and half an hour later the China-

men left their place of concealment and sneaked over to the boat. They slipped across her deck like shadows, making no noise in their bare feet. The door, being securely fastened on the inside, defied them. The skylight was usually just as well secured, but it happened that the day had been an unusually hot one for that neighborhood, and the skylight was left partly open. One of the Celestials was a thin, wiry fellow and he managed to crawl through and drop into the cabin, after unfastening the skylight so it could be raised higher to aid his escape.

He made straight for Tom's room, the door of which stood wide open. In his hand he carried a bottle and a rag. The murderer bent over Tom like a yellow specter, then soaked the rag with the drug and was in the act of laying it gently over the boy's face when he was suddenly seized from behind by a pair of strong arms that held him like a vise. The Chink struggled in vain, then let out a yell of warning to his companion above and gave in. Tom and the other boys were aroused and sprang out of their beds to see Jack Bradley holding a villainous-looking coolie in his grasp. The drugged rag told its tale and the Chinaman was locked up till morning. Then he was taken to Oakland and turned over to the police.

Tom got a San Francisco detective familiar with the highbinders to go over and look at the prisoner. The officer recognized the chap as a member of the Chee Kong Tong. Then the boy was certain that Sam Wong had made another attempt on his life. The coolie was subsequently tried on a charge of attempted burglary and was convicted and sent to San Quentin. Since the finding of the box of gold Tom had decided to give up the deerlict business. He made no more purchases of old vessels, but kept his force busily at work breaking up what he had on hand. At the end of six months nothing remained at the cove but the stranded schooner and the working sloop. Then Tom quit the business for good and embarked in the river freight traffic with his two slops, Ned taking charge of one with Bradley for a helper, and Tom working the other with Mike and Billy. And so ends the story of the young wrecker.

Next week's issue will contain "IN THE GAME FOR GOLD; or, BEATING THE WALL STREET MARKET."

COWS RUIN MELONS

Because the crows of Bartholomew County, Ind., persist in using watermelons and cantaloupes as drinking fountains, growers are losing hundreds of dollars in ruined melons. The extremely hot and dry weather is regarded as the cause. The birds pounce down on the melons, tap them with their beaks, satisfy their thirst and fly away and so far vigilant guards and shotguns have been unable to stop the depredations. To make the matter worse, the feathered thieves, according to the growers, seldom attack the same melon twice, but almost invariably select a fresh one.

CURRENT NEWS

DROUGHT STOPS NAVIGATION

Navigation on the Ohio River from Gallipolis, Ohio, to Cairo, Ill., a distance of 500 miles, was entirely suspended Sept. 30, on account of the lowest stage in the river for fifteen years. The protracted dry spell in Eastern Pennsylvania is beginning to show its effect on rivers and other streames. The weather bureau at Reading reports the Schpylkill River lower at that point than at any time within thirty years. The Schuylkill at Philadelphia is lower than for the last six years.

ANT EATER IS CAPTURED IN THE WILDS OF JERSEY

William Bernard, ferry master of the Pennsylvania Railroad, while hunting near Woodbury, N. J., saw a South American ant eater, five feet long, strutting about.

When he recovered from his surprise Bernard stalked the animal. Getting the ant eater into a thicket, he threw his arms about it.

The captive is believed to have escaped from a South American ship coming up the Delaware.

2,000-YEAR-OLD CITY ON LAKE SUPERIOR ISLE

Working from vague descriptions of a supposedly ancient town near old copper mines on Isle

Royale off the north shore of Lake Superior, William P. F. Ferguson, of Franklin, Pa., an archaeologist, found a series of semi-underground dwellings which he said was the remains of a city inhabited 1,000 to 2,000 years ago.

Mr. Ferguson came out of the north country from his third trip with a party of six aides, and departed for the East, after making known his discovery, in the hope of equipping a party to make more extensive examination of the district.

SUBWAY TO INSTALL SLUG DETECTORS IN TURNSTILES

Installation of devices to detect the use of slugs instead of nickels in the subway turnstiles was begun the other day. Thousands of dollars have been lost by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company because of the accommodating nature of the new turnstiles, which will give a ride as readily for a lead slug, a hat check or a hammered-out penny as they will for a bona fide 5-cent piece.

Engineers of the Transit Commission described the apparatus as a bullseye glass with a strong light behind it which will magnify objects put into the slot so that they are visible several feet away. The company will put special inspectors on duty at the gates, and it is believed that this will put a stop to the cheaters.

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Held Down By Poverty

—OR—

A POOR BOY'S STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

She turned to him quickly.

"You speak like a young gentleman," she said, "and you certainly have acted like one. Mere clothes cannot make character."

Then they reached the corner where the New Chambers street car happened to be coming along, and Harry stopped it. He helped the pretty girl aboard, and as she stood on the platform she turned around and bowed, and as Harry politely raised his cap she gave him a sweet smile that went to his heart.

Then the car went on its way, and for a full minute Harry stood there gazing after it. Then he came to his senses, and trudged thoughtfully on his way, and as he walked along he wondered what her name might be, and whether he would ever see her again.

He thought very often of the pretty girl as he stood in the cold street and sold his papers, and could not repress the wish that chance might favor him with a view of her face again. That night when he went home and waited while his mother cooked his supper, he took the stump of a pencil from his pocket, picked up a piece of paper from the floor, and tried to draw the face that had made such an impression on him.

The next morning he was up bright and early, for he had resolved to get to work an hour earlier than usual, and to allow himself the profits of the extra hour of work to begin a fund that would pay for a bond if he found a job that he could fill.

When he entered the office of one of the leading dailies and walked up to the counter, the young fellow who usually sold him the morning supply nodded familiarly to him.

"How many, Harry?" he asked.

There was an immense pile of papers on the counter in front of the young man, and he seized upon the pile with his left hand, turning them upwards and backwards until they looked like the pages of a book spread out in fanlike style.

Then the young man thrust the thumb of his right hand down among the papers as he held them thus, pulled off a lot, repeated the operation twice, and then took two more from the big pile and placed them on top of those he had taken from it.

"There's your fifty," he said.

Harry had often watched this proceeding with fascinated gaze, and now he spoke about it.

"How do you so surely know that you've got fifty?" he asked, as he handed over his money.

"Because I count them," was the smiling reply.

"As quick as that?"

"Certainly. You see, everybody recognizes a certain number of things when they are grouped together. For instance, you'd know that there were five men standing together or passing you, but you might not be sure if the number ran up to ten or a dozen."

"That's right enough."

"But a car inspector can tell just how many people are standing on a car platform, no matter how crowded it is, while you might be three to five out if you tried to guess how many. It's all a matter of practice, aided by a naturally accurate eye. From constant practice I can recognize sixteen papers when they are spread out fan-shape, so I merely make three digs at them with my thumb, and that makes forty-eight, and then I throw two more on the pile to make fifty."

"That's clear enough," said Harry. "I think I've got a rather quick eye, and I'd like to see what I can do at it."

"Try your luck," laughingly said the young man, and pushed over a great pile of papers to him, adding: "Fifty copies, please."

The conversation had attracted attention, and as Harry reached forth his hands to draw the pile of papers close to him, the different clerks in the counting-room and some newsdealers who had come in, crowded around the boy to watch the experiment with decided interest.

Harry looked at the big pile for an instant, and then seized it with his left hand as he had seen the other do.

Then, with a twist of his wrist, just as he had seen it done hundreds of times before, he spread out the pile in fanshape.

The instant he had done this he thrust the thumb of his right hand down into the pile, separated some of the papers from the main pile, and put them quickly aside.

This he did six times in rapid succession.

Then he finally picked two copies from the pile and laid them down on top of the rest that he had separated.

"Fifty," he announced.

The young man who sold the papers picked them up and rapidly recounted them in his way.

"Right," he said, and looked at Harry approvingly, while a murmur of applause ran around the circle of those who had watched the operation.

"How did he do it?" demanded a news-dealer, curiously.

"Why, he counted eight six times in succession; that is he recognized that his thumb separated exactly eight papers each time he thrust it into the big pile," answered the young man, "and he knew that it made forty-eight in that way, and the two extra copies made the fifty. That's first-class for a green hand, and I'll wager that not another man in the crowd can do it."

"Oh, I think I can," confidently asserted the newsdealer who had asked the question. "Bet you a dollar I do it just like he did."

"You are on," said the other, and the news-dealer seized the pile.

He tried to imitate Harry in the process, made six quick dives at it and laid the papers aside, and then counted off two extra.

"There's your fifty," he said.

The clerk burst out laughing.

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

LARGEST CIRCULAR SAWS

The world's biggest circular saws were made in Philadelphia. There are two of them, each measuring nine feet in diameter. Whirring at the rate of 134 miles an hour, they daily cut their way through giant logs at Hoquiam, Wash.

GIGANTIC DEVIL FISH CAPTURED IN GULF

What is believed to be the largest devil fish ever captured in the Gulf of Mexico was on exhibition at Gulfport, Miss., recently.

The mammoth fish, measuring eighteen feet in length and weighing in the neighborhood of three thousand pounds, became entangled in the net of two fishermen trawling for shrimp. It took four hours to tow the boat to shore and the combined efforts of thirty-two men to drag the fish on the beach.

OREGON JACK RABBITS ARE EATING THE CROPS

J. H. Hoops, a farmer residing near Holdman, twenty-five miles from Pendleton, Ore., arrived in Pendleton to telegraph an appeal to Washington for government aid in fighting jackrabbits that have infested the central part of Umatilla County and are doing serious damage to growing wheat and rye. Owing to the state bounty, coyotes have been practically exterminated, and with the disappearance of their natural enemies the jackrabbits have multiplied in serious proportions. Hoops claims that in one instance a section of grain land fifteen miles long and twelve miles wide has been eaten clean by the rabbits.

Hoops will urge the government to send agents here to inoculate captive rabbits with the bacilli of a disease fatal to rodents, known as "rabbit distemper," with the expectation that those inoculated when turned loose will infest all others with which they come in contact.

ODD USES FOR BREAD

Instead of baking bread in loaves, the inhabitants of Asia Minor, Arabia, Turkestan and the Tigris-Euphrates valley make it into sheets, says *Youth's Companion*. These sheets are about 40 inches wide and twice as long, and the natives make almost as much use of them as the American Indian does of birch bark. If they need an awning for protection against sun or rain, they unwind a roll of this bread, and carry it back and forth over a pole several times, much as a camper puts up a dog tent; for if it has a coat of almond oil or mutton tallow, the bread is fairly waterproof.

It is a comical sight to see a teamster or camel driver of the Levant travel placidly through a heavy shower with a couple of yards of bread sheeting thrown over his shoulders, and to see him tear off pieces here and there and chew on them if he feels hungry. The bread is made of durum wheat flour, mixed with the pulp of sultana raisins, which gives it a sweet taste and a slight fragrance like that of honey.

The Arab uses his sheets of bread, which look like chamois leather, for a makeshift blanket, and it is said by travelers who have tried it that it keeps the heat in and the cold out almost as well as a real blanket. But some of the Russian engineers at work on the construction of the trans-Siberian railway did even better, for they made a paste of the bread by boiling several pieces, and then stuck together two strips of the sheeting, each a meter wide by two meters long. Thus they manufactured a sleeping bag, and a very comfortable one, too.

The Turkish peasants use this flat bread for window panes, and in the bazaars the venders of merchandise wind up pieces as a grocer does a paper cornucopia, and use them to hold small amounts of nuts, Turkish candies, and squares of sugar. Of course, the purchaser eats the bag with its contents. In the same shape the bread sheeting is used for holding the fruity drinks of the Bosphorus; but it will not stand hot liquids, even when it is coated with almond oil. Thanks to the raisin pulp, the bread is of remarkable elasticity, and can be bent back and forth without cracking. It has actually been used for book-binding.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.,

106 West 23d Street,

New York City

"Moving Picture Stories"

A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.

106 West 23d St., New York

Wild Ranch Life In New South Wales.

by ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

Years ago, when I had a sheep ranch at the intersection of the Murrumbidgee and the Lachian rivers, New South Wales, the Australian bush-ranger was at his best. I was the agent of an English syndicate, which owned 200,000 acres of land and as many sheep, and was at the same time buying and shipping living curiosities to the great animal dealer at Hamburg. The natives of Australia have been thumped about by the English soldiery until they have no spirit left, but in those days a portion of them were as bad as the Apaches of the United States. Out in the wilds they were on the alert for travelers and pioneers, and, though the English always affected to despise them, it is a fact that every battle ground on the vast island has proved them fierce fighters.

When I finally got settled at the point I have named I had quite an army under me. We had about twenty huts, a stockade inclosing an acre of ground, several big sheep pens, two or three horse pens, a dirt fort, surrounded by palisades, and the number of natives employed as herders was over fifty. Most of these had their wives and children with them, and as there were five white men besides myself it will be seen that we were a pretty strong party. We needed to be. We had gone a full hundred miles beyond civilization, and right into the stronghold of the bush-rangers and the fighting natives. Three different surveying parties sent out by the government, the last accompanied by seventy-five soldiers, had been attacked and routed with severe loss. It was expected that I would have trouble, and we arranged for it. About forty of the natives had previously been employed in sheep-herding, and were used to firearms. I bought two pieces of artillery at Sydney, and took them along for our fort, and we were plentifully supplied with muskets, repeating carbines, and ammunition. Our coming was a surprise to the denizens, and we had time to get settled before they had perfected their plans to attack us. We had at that time only about 20,000 sheep, and over half the herders could be spared for the work of building the pens and erecting the stockades.

Our village was erected on a fine plateau of about two acres in extent. The ground fell away gradually on all sides, and the nearest scrub was about a quarter of a mile from us on the east. A bit of land which we called the "thumb" broke away from the forest to the east and pushed its way into the prairie toward us. This neck, or thumb, was half a mile long and not over twenty rods wide, and offered splendid cover to a force advancing upon us. I saw at once that it would be the point to attack, and at the end I built a sheep pen a hundred feet wide and two hundred feet long. The side toward us was ten feet high. Our two six-pounders were then loaded with shell and trained upon the pen. We dug two rifle pits on the flanks of our fort, facing this thumb, and a week before the alarm came we had everything in good shape for a fight. I was very anxious to

have it come. It was bound to come sooner or later, and until we had been attacked and given our assailants a good thrashing there could be no such thing as security.

One day, when I was almost cursing the natives for their slowness in attack, two white men rode up to the post. I knew them for bushrangers at a glance. They had the attire and the demeanor, and were mounted on fine horses and carried rifles and revolvers. One of them dismounted at the door of my office and came in. He was a fellow about forty years old, stout as an ox, and evidently had plenty of nerve, or he would not have shown himself there at all. When he had passed the time of day he asked for whisky, tossed down a big draught, and then said:

"Now, captain, to bizness. Hev ye come to stay?"

"I have."

"How much are ye willin' to pay?"

"For what?"

"For bein' let alone. You was gettin' settled and was all upsot, and it wouldn't hev bin manners to call on ye sooner. The boys want to know now what they kin count on."

"I don't exactly understand you," I said.

"You don't! I took you for an old campaigner. This 'ere land belongs to us. We are willin' to rent it to you fur a fair price. If we make a bargain it will include our purtection."

"This is government land, or was until we filed our papers and made a first payment."

"Was it? D'ye see any gov'ment round 'ere anywheres? And redcoats at hand to purtect ye?"

"We can protect ourselves. If your gang and the natives want to live at peace with me, all right. If you want trouble I'll give you fighting until you are sick of it."

"Whew!" he exclaimed in genuine astonishment. "Well, if that don't beat me! So you don't propose to pay us rent?"

"Not a cent."

"And you don't want our purtection?"

"No, sir."

"Why, man, you must be crazy! Thar are a dozen or more of us bushboys, and we kin raise a force of three hundred natives to swoop down on ye! By Sunday ye won't have a sheep nor a hunt nor a man left, and I'll hev ye ears fur keepsakes."

"Come and try it," I replied. "Let me alone and I'll let you alone, but if you attack me I'll not rest until the last of you are under ground."

He looked at me as if he doubted my sanity, and after a bit, helped himself to another glass of whisky and went out without a word. After a confab with his companion he returned to the door and explained:

"Say, Kurnel, we like yer pluck, but ye must come down with the rent or take chances. It wouldn't do, you know! If we let up on you thar'd be a dozen fellers in 'ere with their sheepses inside of a year, and we'd hev to cut sticks or go to the poorhouse."

"Come as soon as you like," I replied, without looking up at him, and he muttered an oath and rode off.

I called in some of the most intelligent natives, and we were soon agreed that no attack need be

looked for under three days. It would take the bushrangers that long to stir up the natives and get them together. When the natives were asked how we would be approached they pointed to the "thumb" and criticized my action in erecting the sheep pen, which offered an enemy a shield of observation. No native Australian will move by night if it can be avoided, and no night attacks are ever made by them. We decided that on the third night the attacking force would gather on the thumb and be ready to attack us at daylight, and our plans were laid accordingly. Neither the bushrangers nor the natives knew that we had cannon. They knew that we had muskets, but they could not say how many. We should have to depend entirely upon ourselves as a troop of soldiers could not have been sent for and reached us inside of a week.

On the second day after the visit from the bushrangers some of the herders saw signs of the coming attack. The natives were moving swiftly about in considerable numbers, and it was further evident that spies were watching us. That night I had the sheep herded between the Lachlan River and a bluff, where ten men could hold them safely. The night passed quietly. Next day the "signs" were more numerous, and toward sundown one of my scouts came in with the information that a force numbering at least four hundred natives and twenty white men was coming through the scrub in the direction of the thumb. This was good news to me. The sheep were brought in and herded as before, and when night had fully come I put fifteen natives in each rifle pit and gathered all the rest of my people into the fort. We had talked matters over until every one knew what was expected of him.

Some of us caught a little sleep as the night wore on, but we were all wide enough awake when the first signs of daylight came. When it was light enough for us to see the pen a mass of natives swarmed suddenly around each corner of it, and made a rush for the fort. We talk about the yells of our Indians, but a native Australian can out-yell three of them. They swarmed over the plain in a great mob, yelling, shrieking, and brandishing their spears and clubs, and they might have thought us asleep until they came within pistol shot. Then they were between the rifle pits, and a volley was fired which took the pluck out of them in a minute. We swept them with a fire in front, and back they went for shelter, leaving over forty dead and wounded on the grass. Not a white man had come with them, but I soon discovered the reason. They had divided themselves into two parties, and had skulked around to attack our rear. I called in five natives from each rifle pit, and in a few minutes we were posted to meet all the dangers. It was ten minutes before the natives could get their courage up to charge again, but when they did come they evidently felt savage. The three bodies assailed us at once, and for five minutes it was hot enough for the oldest veteran. The bushrangers were surprised to find us inside of stout earth walls and palisades, but they fought well and broke back only when they saw how useless their efforts were. Two were killed out of one party, and three out of the other, and when the charge was over the natives literally cumbered the earth.

Now for the field-pieces. The mob had gathered in the big sheep pen to reform, and we could hear their angry chatter and the oaths of the white men when I gave orders to fire. The two reports sounded as one, and the two shells went screaming through the pen. It was the finishing stroke, and it is doubtful if the records of war can show greater execution by two missiles. We found twenty-seven men killed by those shells, and the moral effect was greater than the presence of a regiment of soldiers. Two of the victims were bushrangers, making seven we had bagged, and it was afterward learned that two more died of their wounds. On those killed we got a government reward of upward of 900 pounds, it transpiring that all were old offenders.

About two weeks after the battle an English tourist came into the station on foot and badly used up. He had been captured by bushrangers at a point about twenty-five miles away, robbed of horse, money, and clothing, and he came to us as naked as the day he was born. The leader of the ruffians who despoiled him was the chap who paid me a visit before the battle. He had received a bullet through the calf of the leg, and panted for revenge. He spared the tourist in order to make a messenger of him. He sent me word that he would have my life if he had to wait a dozen years for a chance to take it, and I was not egotist enough to let the warning go unheeded.

At noon one very hot day I was riding across a prairie of several miles in extent, having been out to locate a grazing ground for a new flock. I was within a mile of the scrub when a horseman rode out of it and charged at me. We were facing each other, and it didn't take me five minutes to make up my mind that the stranger was my old enemy the bushranger. Instead of waiting to ambush me he was coming out for a fair fight. I had a seven-shooter carbine and a revolver, and he had the same. I halted my horse, slipped out of the saddle, and as he came thundering on I shot his horse in the breast, and he went down. The rider was up like a cat, and, kneeling beside his horse, he fired five shots at me as fast as he could pull the trigger. I heard the ping of every bullet, though I was busily shooting at him. His carbine fouled with the fifth shot, and he sprang up and pulled his revolver. I still had two shots left, and I knew I could kill him. He must come nearer to make his pistol effective, and he was gathering himself for the run, when Providence stepped in to prevent me from shedding his blood. He was standing near the hind feet of his horse. The dying animal suddenly drew up both feet and gave a tremendous kick, and the outlaw was knocked over and over on the grass. As he lay perfectly quiet, I finally advanced to find him dead, his whole right side crushed in by the powerful blow. I found about 400 pounds in gold about him, together with three fine watches he had taken from travelers, and it was evident from the way he had packed things that he was only waiting to kill me before leaving for some distant part of the country. He was the last bushranger seen in that district, which to-day contains five or six towns and a white population of thousands.

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

EAGER TO BE HERMITS

England seems to possess quite a number of would-be hermits. A short time ago this advertisement appeared in a number of newspapers:

"Wanted, a hermit to inhabit remote cottage in big woods, available at once. Small rent to one not afraid of foxes and poachers."

Next day there were 150 applications for hermithood from every part of England.

The cottage belongs to the Duke of Devonshire, and contains two rooms and bakehouse downstairs, three bedrooms upstairs, garden, orchard, stable, and well of water. "Approach bad and garden run wild."

The successful applicant came from Cardiff and he now has the cottage at a rental of five pounds a year.

A NEAT TRAP FOR POACHERS

A keeper recently awakened to the fact that in the silent watches of the night some of his patients were being systematically purloined. Footprints were always discernible; but, as there was nothing remarkable about any of them, they were of no value for detective purposes. They served, however, to suggest a plan. He went to the local cobbler and offered him a generous reward for the performance of a very simple task. When three suspected persons sent their boots for repairs, the nails or tacks were to be placed in the soles according to different designs which the keeper would provide. The son of St. Crispin agreed to the proposal, and it was carried into effect as opportunity offered. The result was that a charge of poaching was proved against two of the three men through the distinctive impressions made by their boots in the retentive soil. The cobbler's connivance in the keeper's little scheme was, of course, kept a strict secret.

BLIND BRITISHERS CAN DO MANY THINGS

The police have forbidden a Yorkshire tradesman to drive a motor car, but only because he is blind.

This sightless man is something of a prodigy. He can tell to an inch almost, where he is in Leeds or Harrogate, or on the road between those

towns. But since the days of Blind Jack of Knaresborough, the greatest roadmaker of the north, blind Yorkshiremen have seemed to delight in proving the loss of sight to be little handicap.

Leeds long had its blind cabinetmaker, specimens of whose work found their way into foreign courts, as well as English mansions. One of the most famous botanists of the day, again a Leedsman, is blind. Selby has a blind shopkeeper who manages his own business, easily recognizing the different articles, and who puts in his spare time tramping the country round about and preaching. One of the most consistent supporters of Huddersfield Town Football Club last season was a blind man, who went to every match, and on occasion supplied to a newspaper reports of the game which were wonderfully accurate, including details that spectators who would see had not particularly noted.

In many districts there are blind men who daily journey several miles along the roads between their homes and places of work. Darkness and fog have no terrors for them. The one thing that can upset their equanimity is a fall of snow, for snow deadens all sounds and leaves them as much at sea as a thick fog does those people who rely on their eyes.

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY," published weekly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1922. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of "FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY" and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor and business manager are: Publisher—Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Editor—Luis Senarens, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Managing Editor—None. Business Manager—None.

2. That the owners are: Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.; Harry E. Wolff, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.; M. N. Wolff, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.; J. F. Desbecker, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.; R. W. Desbecker, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.; C. W. Hastings, 166 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y.

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LUIS SENARENS, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of September, 1922. Seymour W. Steiner. (My Commission expires March 30, 1924.)

GOOD READING

STEAM ROLLER HEARSE

The body of George Trice of London, went to its grave in a steam-roller instead of a hearse.

Trice worked for twenty-five years as a driver of a steam roller and expressed the wish that he might be taken to the grave in the machine which he had operated for many years. His wish was fulfilled, despite the incongruity of the funeral procession.

QUIT PRISON IN PAY PROTEST

Guards who keep the criminals in Sing Sing are protesting that the salary paid the first-year men is insufficient to live on and prison officials announced to-day that six of them have resigned.

Warden Lawes will try to replace them by selecting applicants from the Civil Service list. The men who have thrown up the jobs assert that the cost of rent for married men or room and board for single men around the countryside near the prison is too expensive. Guards begin with a \$1,200 salary and the pay increases each year for four years, until they receive a maximum of \$1,600 per year. The complaints come chiefly from the first-year men. Besides those who have left the prison service, others have asked to be transferred to penal institutions upstate, where rent and food are cheaper.

WOMAN SENDS 42,000 CENTS TO PAY GREENWICH TAXI BILL

A wealthy woman residing in a fashionable section of Greenwich, Conn., moved to her winter home in New York City recently, leaving a bill of \$420 owing the Greenwich Cab Company for taxicab fares. A representative of the company had visited her estate on two occasions in an effort to collect the bill before she left, but was unsuccessful.

The other day the woman sent a taxicab from New York to the cab company's office with a large keg containing 42,000 one-cent pieces. With it she sent \$1 to pay for the taxi that had made the two trips to her home for the purpose of collecting the money, and her photograph, under which was written "O la la."

It took four men to carry the keg into the Putnam Trust Company office and place it in a private vault.

SWARM OF DETECTIVES GUARD MURPHY

Every step Charles F. Murphy, leader of Tammany Hall, took while he was in Syracuse was closely guarded by several members of the New York detective force, private operatives and members of the Syracuse bureau. Just before Mr. Murphy left New York he received several letters threatening him bodily injury while he was in Syracuse.

He had been threatened before. Many times cranks had mailed him "death" letters, but the Tammany chief paid little attention to these missives. He seems to have taken a different attitude toward the latest threats.

New York detectives were assigned to guard Mr. Murphy when he left New York. They ac-

companied him in the same coach from Manhattan to Syracuse. When they arrived there they were joined by some private operatives and members of Chief Cadin's bureau. The body guard even followed him to the convention hall.

BALANCE WEIGHS MILLIONTH MILLIGRAM

If you can imagine a single grain of some substance divided into 600,000,000 parts, and one of these parts weighed accurately upon a balance, you will get some idea of the sensitiveness of the latest laboratory weighing machine.

This balance, devised by Hans Pettersen, is an improvement on the delicate quartz balance made some time ago by two scientific men named Steele and Grant.

The beam of the balance is a small piece of quartz measuring less than two inches in length and weighing about a grain only. What would correspond to the pans in an ordinary pair of delicate scales are suspended from quartz threads a thousandth of a millimetre (11.5,000 of an inch) in diameter.

The actual weighing is done by measuring the vibrations of the balance by means of a spot of light thrown upon a scale, which shows the actual movement of the balance enormously magnified.

Such refined weighing has to be done in a vacuum, and the instrument is mounted in a container from which the air can be exhausted before the actual work commences.

The balance itself weighs about 3 grains and measures to a ten-millionth of a milligram.

"POP BOTTLE MYSTERY" SOLVER WAS LUCKY MAN

James P. Hon, a salesman of St. Louis, is the luckiest baseball fan in the world. While thousands were scrambling for world's series tickets, Hon had been given a complete set by Ban B. Johnson, President of the American League, accompanied by a personal check for \$100 and round-trip transportation between St. Louis and New York. Hon's employers have given him leave of absence at full pay to attend the games.

And all because he solved the "pop bottle mystery," the result of Fielder Whitey Witt of the Yankees being struck on the head by a pop bottle during a crucial series in St. Louis recently. Witt was so badly injured that he had to be carried off the field, and great indignation was expressed over the incident in all sections of the country. Several rewards were offered for the identification of the supposed thrower of the bottle.

Hon, who happened to have a seat near the spot where Witt was injured, solved the mystery when, in a letter to Mr. Johnson, he explained just how the accident occurred. The letter said Witt, while running, stepped on the neck of a bottle, causing it to bounce up and strike him on the head. Mr. Johnson was so well pleased with Hon's explanation that he sent him the reward, railway and baseball tickets.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

HORN SOUNDED FOR 1,000 YEARS

Ripon, England, keeps up a custom 1,000 years old. Every night a "wakeman," attired in official costume appears before the Mayor's house and blows three solemn notes on the "horn of Ripon."

ROB STORE NEXT TO JAIL

Entering the store of Ralph Morcardio, next to the Town Hall and jail, Huntington, L. I., three men recently tied Morcardio to a chair, took \$100 from his pockets and escaped.

Morcardio was closing the store when the men entered. One drew a revolver and ordered him into the back of the store, where he was tied. As they took the money from his pocket, Morcardio started to yell. He was stunned by a blow on the head. When the proprietor recovered he managed to free himself and gave the alarm.

TELLS OF SPIRIT GOING

Before he lapsed into unconsciousness, William Hawley Smith, author and educator, who died in Leoria, Ill., the other day, told the Rev. B. G. Carpenter that his mentality allowed him to analyze separation of the spirit and the body.

According to the Rev. Carpenter, Smith claimed that he could feel the changes taking place in his body. During the last stages of separation, the dying man said his mind could not stay concentrated on one subject. Smith recited Whitman's poem, "Assurances," which deals with the thought that everything is provided.

Smith requested that there be no black at his funeral and that no friends view his body.

BLIND ANTS AND BEES DAMAGE ELECTRIC POLES

The latest enemy of the public utility company is an insect. Blind ants and carpenter bees are engaging the attention of the electrical men throughout the country. The insects are causing much damage to electric light poles.

They enter the pole below the ground, eating their way through poles all the way to the top. Being blind, they instinctively seem to shun the light and confine their operations beneath the surface. Methods of checking the devastation are being considered.

A TRAMP'S SUCCESS

Five years ago Bob Carley came to Glenburn, Me., as a tramp too ill to travel. After recuperating he spent the winter in cutting and shaving hoop-poles, earning a living and having \$10 coming to him in the spring. With this money he bought ten acres of alder-grown hoop-pole swamp, and began to burn rough alder wood into charcoal, which he sold in Bangor. He used the crooked sticks for making rustic lawn furniture—settees, chairs and rude swings—all of which found quick sales among the summer visitors who owned cottages. Later in the season he reaped tons of cat-tail flags, the leaves of which are used by coopers for shrinking in between their new

barrel staves, and which sold for \$60 a ton, ten times the price of ordinary meadow hay. The next winter he again turned his energies to making hoop-poles. Owing to the rapid growth of the alders, he learned that the sprouts would grow from the size of a lead pencil to four and five inches in diameter and be fit for cutting in ten years. By dividing his land into ten lots, each containing an acre, and cutting off one acre every year, he could keep up a succession of fuel and charcoal for all time. Last summer Carley built a house costing nearly \$2,000. It is finished and paid for, and the owner has money in two banks, and is getting an income of \$1,500 a year from a strip of swamp land which was not thought to be worth returning thanks for, and sold for about enough to pay for making out the transfer papers. Just now the citizens think the ex-tramp is one of the most successful men in town, and have offered to elect him to the Legislature so he may teach the lawmakers how to earn big profits from muck swamps.

BITE OF TARANTULA IS BARELY SERIOUS

Folklore abounds in stories of phenomenal manifestations which often fail to survive the test of critical examination. Accounts of unexpected occurrences or unusual symptoms often grow like rolling snowballs, adding to their size with each step in the course of progress. Small effects may become magnified into great ones, suspicions develop somehow into the dignity of probabilities or even real facts. New traditions seem to spring up from undiscovered sources. Something of the nature of such mystic influences may account for the prevalent belief in the extreme danger associated with the tarantula.

The fatal bite of these terror inspiring insects has been widely proclaimed so that they are given a wide berth by those who recognize them. The poisonous properties of various species of spiders is admitted by competent investigators. Many of the insects have poison secreting glands which discharge into the jaws. But there is little doubt that the danger from some of them has been greatly exaggerated, says the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Von Fuerth considers that the bite of the historically famous Italian tarantula is able to cause no more than local inflammation, which the toxicologist Kobert was unable to discover profoundly poisonous properties in the supposedly more dangerous Russian tarantula. Now the American tarantula, *Eurypelma steindachneri*, a species reaching the formidable looking adult size of more than two inches in length, has been exonerated from the reputation long attaching to it.

Baerg of the University of Arkansas has subjected both animals and man to attack by the fangs of active tarantulas. Although the accounts do not give the impression that such encounters are painless performances they are put in the category of bee sting in severity rather than into the class of more menacing toxins.

A GIRL SLEUTH

The "girl avenger," as she is now known to the entire State, has tallied another victim. Moonshine whisky making, once the chief secondary industry of the forest regions of Tate and Marshall Counties, recently appeared to be destined to be numbered among the lost arts. And all because of a girl of seventeen.

Cora Frazier, a slim, good-looking daughter of the backwoods, is responsible. What her reasons for starting the crusade are remain securely locked in her own breast. Kinship has not interfered with her. Already her father is serving a penitentiary sentence for moonshining, convicted on her sworn testimony. Two other near relatives await trial in the mountain jail at Holly. Her uncle, her father's brother, fell another victim to her zeal.

A dozen men have been brought into court on information supplied by her. Fully as many more are fugitives. Her life has been threatened, but this has not moved her.

Miss Frazier is a silent sleuth. She works alone, only summoning the officials when she has her evidence complete and when the trap is ready to be sprung.

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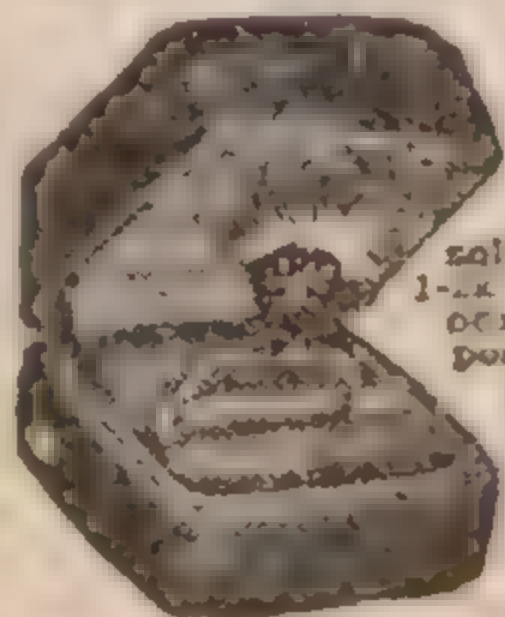
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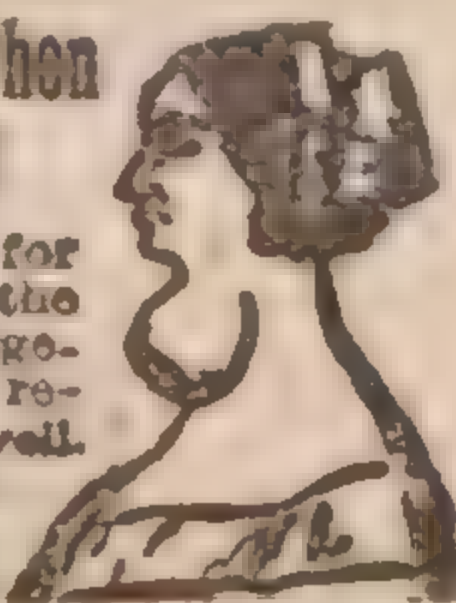
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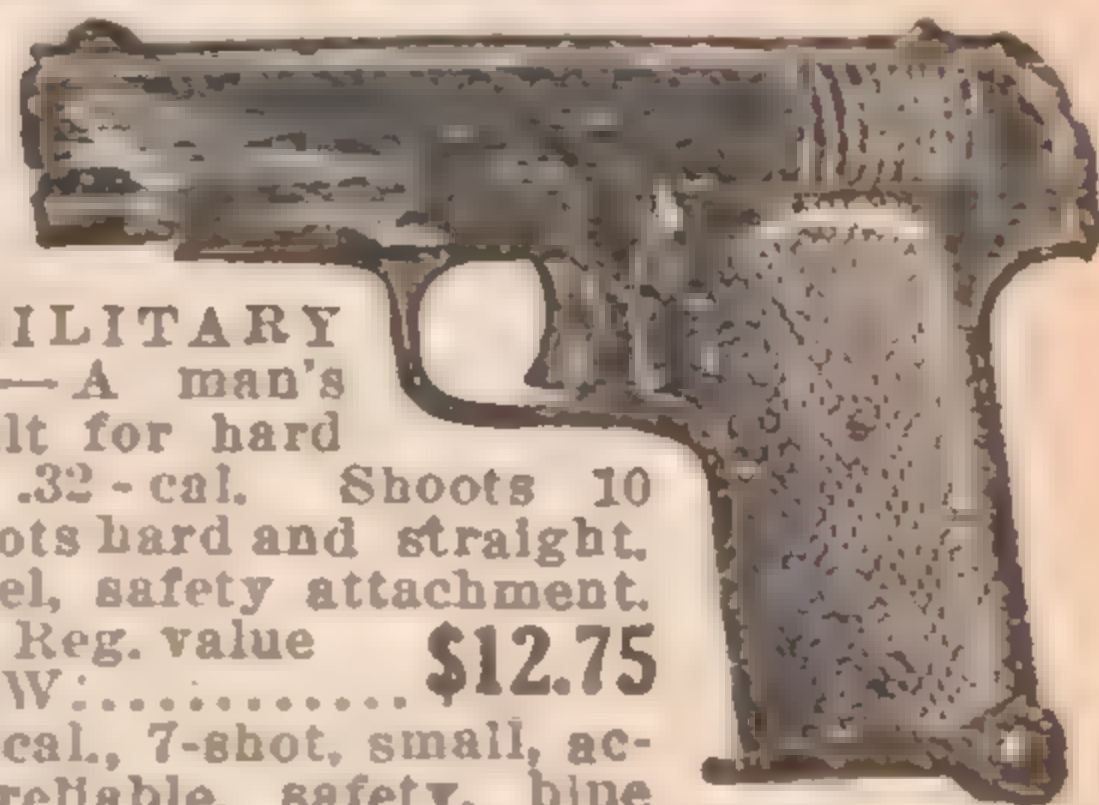
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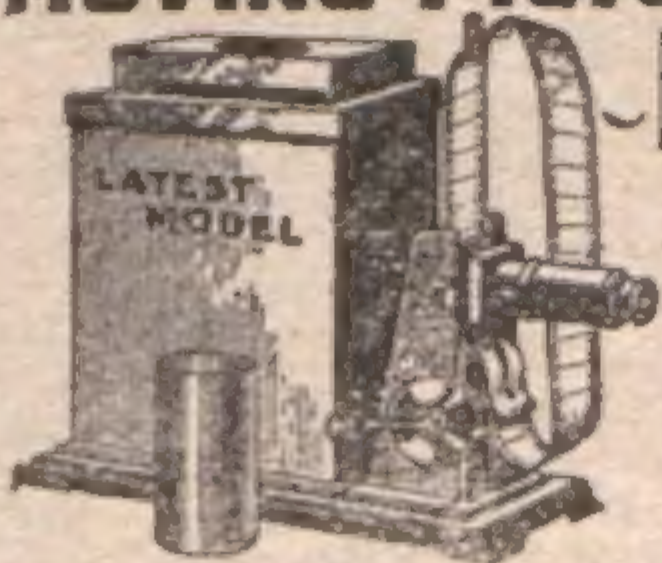
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